



RELATÓRIO ANUAL

DA

JUNTA DE SUPERINTENDENTES GERAIS

PARA A

90ª JUNTA GERAL

DA

IGREJA DO NAZARENO

24 de fevereiro de 2013

O Otimismo Radical da Graça

Introdução

Porquanto a graça de Deus se manifestou salvadora a todos os homens.

Tito 2:11 (NIV)

Em nome da Junta de Superintendentes Gerais (JSG), eu os saúdo no nome de nosso Senhor e Salvador, Jesus Cristo, e formalmente lhes dou as boas-vindas à 90ª Sessão da Junta Geral da Igreja do Nazareno. A história deste ambiente é um lembrete que os superintendentes gerais, oficiais gerais, e diretores são responsáveis à denominação por suas áreas respectivas de responsabilidade.

O Relatório da Junta Geral representa o ministério e sacrifício dos Nazarenos em 159 áreas mundiais. Pastores. Leigos. Missionários. Professores de Escola Dominical. Líderes de grupos pequenos. Superintendentes Distritais. Evangelistas. Capelães. Educadores. Trabalhadores do ministério de compaixão. Funcionários e voluntários da equipe da igreja. Eles incorporam os Valores Centrais Nazarenos de Santidade e Missionalidade Cristã.

Pela graça de Deus, cada um contribui de várias maneiras importantes para a missão da igreja de fazer discípulos à semelhança de Cristo nas nações.

Ao darmos início a esta apresentação, permitam-me destacar uma coisa: independente da cultura ou época, a igreja deve ser mais esperançosa e otimista porque *nós vivemos em dias do favor de Deus* – não no favor do mundo, mas sim no favor e na fidelidade de Deus.

Em 120 dias o martelo irá bater, abrindo a 28ª Assembleia Geral da Igreja do Nazareno em Indianapolis no estado de Indiana, EUA. No domingo dia 23 de junho de 2013, o povo chamado de Nazareno se reunirá de todo o mundo para adorar e celebrar a comunhão, fazendo assim a abertura oficial da Assembleia Geral.

Orações já estão em andamento, lideradas pela Missão Nazarena Internacional, enquanto buscamos a presença de Deus em nosso meio para as Convenções Gerais, Assembleia Geral, e a viagem segura para todos que estarão atendendo. Que o Espírito dEle possa liderar a nossa igreja, tanto agora quanto no futuro.

As preparações para esta reunião de “família” já estão em andamento, sob a direção do Secretario Geral David Wilson e sua equipe. Eles também são responsáveis pelas preparações e administração da Junta Geral. Por favor junte-se a mim no reconhecimento do Dr. Wilson, Judy Veigl, Susan Metcalf, Shirley Marvin, Diane Miller, e outros por seu diligente trabalho em possibilitar as nossas reuniões em Overland Park em Kansas, EUA.

Esta é a quarta e ultima sessão da Junta Geral deste quadriênio. Nós cremos que cada membro continuará orando e contatando seu parceiro de oração designado em nossa sessão de 2011 em Louisville em Kentucky, EUA.

É através da oração que temos comunhão com Deus e construímos relacionamentos em Jesus Cristo, que duram toda uma vida.

Atualizações Gerais

Muitas coisas aconteceram em um ano.

Em abril de 2012, Eugênio R. Duarte adicionou mais um “primeiro” à sua lista de tarefas de liderança na Igreja do Nazareno. Ele se tornou a primeira pessoa não descendente de Anglicanos a presidir a Junta de Superintendentes Gerais. Esta responsabilidade inclui a supervisão de nosso Centro de Ministério Global e Casa Nazarena de Publicações.

Também em Abril, Verne Ward III, assumiu a posição de diretor da Missão Global. Para aqueles que têm um entendimento chegado a esse cargo, você bem sabe que esta é uma tarefa de grande peso. Verne Ward tem um coração cheio do amor de Cristo e é um servo líder que preocupa-se profundamente com o mundo todo – o seu novo campo de missões.

Em agosto de 2012, o Grupo de Estudo do Futuro Nazareno, aprovado pela Assembleia Geral de 2009, apresentou seu relatório final e recomendações à JSG. A nossa Junta passou tempo analisando cuidadosamente a informação e visão para um sistema aprimorado de missões que nos impulsionaria em rumo a “igreja de 2030.” As resoluções propostas para a Assembleia Geral de 2013 foram apresentadas à Junta Geral ontem dia 23 de fevereiro de 2013.

A JSG sente-se grata pelo trabalho realizado por este grupo de estudo liderado por J. David McClung, como presidente, e Ken Mills, como secretário.

Em setembro, depois de um longo processo de escolha, a Junta Geral elegeu Gerald Smith como presidente da Casa Nazarena de Publicações (CNP). O Sr. Smith sucede C. Hardy Weathers, que se aposentou no dia 30 de novembro de 2012, depois de servir como presidente da CNP desde 1998.

Líderes de 18 denominações reuniram-se recentemente para os encontros da Aliança Global Wesleyana, na sede para Igrejas de Cristo em União Cristã (ICUC) em Circleville no estado de Ohio, EUA. Esta parceria extraordinária foi formada em dezembro de 2011 para ampliar a voz profética dos ministérios de santidade Wesleyanos-Arminianos e para aumentar a efetividade na propagação da santidade escritural por todo o mundo.

Thomas Hermiz, superintendente geral da ICUC, foi eleito presidente e David Graves foi eleito secretário. A Aliança criada em 2011, foi aprovada em princípio pelo grupo.

Transições

A igreja observou lamentavelmente o falecimento do Superintendente Geral Emérito William J. Prince, no dia 24 de dezembro de 2012 com a idade de 82 anos. Ele foi eleito à Junta de Superintendentes Gerais em 1989 e aposentou-se em 2001. O seu longo mandato também incluiu serviço à igreja como pastor, superintendente distrital e presidente de faculdade.

Os antigos membros da Junta Geral, Ray Cook, um médico de Wichita no estado de Kansas, EUA, e Millard Reed, presidente aposentado da Trevecca Nazarene University, foram estar com

o Senhor em 2012. A denominação também perdeu dois servos leigos, Paul Skiles (juventude e comunicações) e Ray Hendrix (World Mission Radio e Publicações). Ambos estavam aposentados de seus serviços para com a igreja internacional.

Estes homens de Deus providenciaram uma liderança forte para a igreja por muitos anos.

Aposentadorias

Três aposentadorias foram anunciadas em dezembro de 2012.

Jesse C. Middendorf, meu antigo superintendente distrital em Oklahoma, estará saindo da superintendência geral depois de servir neste cargo desde 2001. O Dr. Middendorf teve um impacto em minha vida e meu ministério, como também o fez a muitos outros. Ele é um mentor, encorajador, colega, e amigo. Tem sido pra mim um privilegio servir com ele na Junta de Superintendentes Gerais.

Eu também estarei me aposentando da JSG apos a Assembleia Geral. Como escrevi a meus colegas, “eu estimo a cada um de vocês como amigos, e eu tenho uma profunda apreciação pela irmandade e encorajamento que eu tenho recebido. Verdadeiramente tem sido uma experiência muito proveitosa poder trabalhar com cada um de vocês.

“É chegada a hora em que eu devo me aposentar desta função. O meu plano é de dedicar o resto da minha vida à minha paixão de treinar, criar recursos e encorajar pastores.”

A terceira aposentadoria é a de David J. Felter, editor geral, que estará completando seu serviço apos a Assembleia Geral de 2013. A sua fidelidade e sua dedicação para com a Igreja do Nazareno em múltiplas funções dentro do Centro de Ministério Global, resultaram em produtos de qualidade e teologicamente saudáveis para pastores e leigos através de livros, artigos e *Holiness Today*.

Os nossos agradecimentos vão para o Dr. Felter por 50 anos de ministério, incluindo 27 na Sede Internacional e no CMG.

A Graça de Deus: Trabalhando no Mundo

Meu Pai continua trabalhando até hoje, e eu também estou trabalhando.

João 5:17 (NIV)

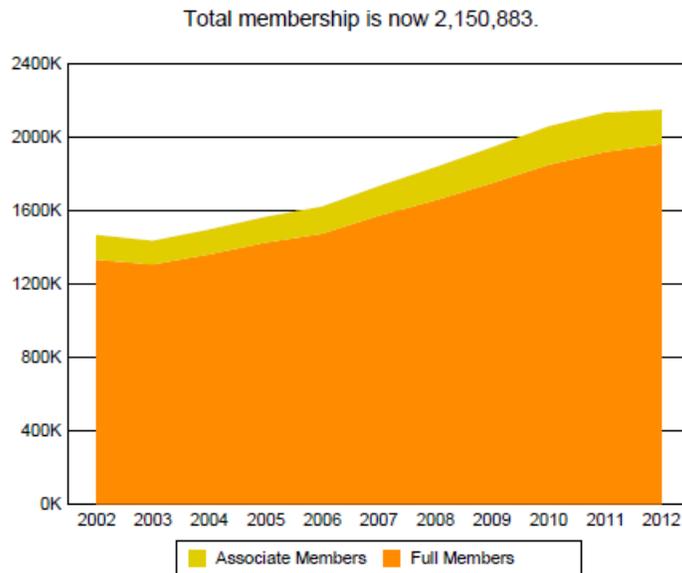
Colegas de trabalho a serviço de Deus

Enquanto olhamos nas tendências estatísticas do ano passado, somos lembrados das escrituras de Paulo para a igreja de Corinto:

Quem é Apolo? E quem é Paulo? Servos por meio de quem crestes, e isto conforme o Senhor concedeu a cada um. Eu plantei, Apolo regou; mas o crescimento veio de Deus. De modo que nem o que planta é alguma coisa, nem o que rega, mas Deus, que dá o crescimento. Ora, o que planta e o que rega são um; e cada um receberá o seu galardão, segundo o seu próprio trabalho. Porque de Deus somos cooperadores; lavoura de Deus, edifício de Deus sois vós (1 Coríntios 3:5–9, NIV).

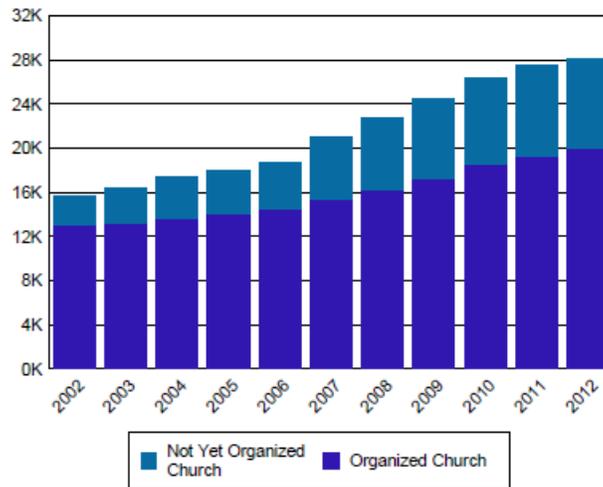
A denominação tem visto grande crescimento em algumas áreas e ajustes de baixa em outras:

- O número total de membros agora é de 2,15 milhões – um aumento de sete décimos de um por cento (0,7 por cento) sobre o ano de 2011, enquanto o índice de crescimento da igreja diminuiu novamente em 2012.

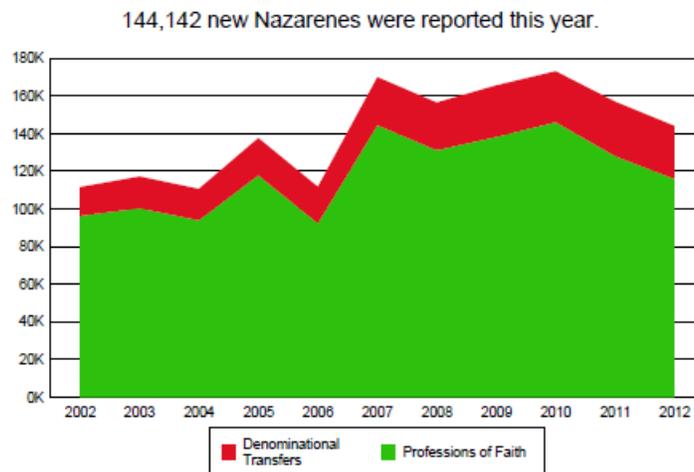


- Existem 28.130 igrejas, das quais 20.041 são organizadas.

28,130 churches were reported worldwide this year.
(20,041 are organized.)



- 144.142 novos Nazarenos foram relatados – uma redução de 8,2 por cento sobre o ano anterior – o segundo ano consecutivo de reduções no numero de Nazarenos, porem continua sendo o sexto maior total relatado na historia.



Uma Visão Mais Aprofundada

Uma análise mais detalhada do relatório do secretario geral mostra o seguinte:

- Apenas as menores igrejas e igrejas recém abertas da denominação relataram aumentos nos cultos em 2012.
- Mais de 45 por cento dos novos Nazarenos em 2012 vieram de igrejas que relataram menos de 100 pessoas nos cultos em 2011.

- Igrejas que recém começaram a reportar são responsáveis por 16 por cento (um em seis) dos novos Nazarenos em 2012, principalmente devido as Regiões da África e Eurásia tendo grandes números de novas igrejas

Um estudo pelo Centro Nazareno de Pesquisa, mostra que desde 2007, 81 por cento do crescimento do numero de membros veio de apenas 18 de 133 áreas do mundo que reportam (13 por cento). Deve-se notar que o crescimento na igreja tem sido historicamente irregular na medida que os movimentos de Deus se dissipam pelo mundo.

Junta Internacional de Educação (JIE)

A study by the Nazarene Research Center shows that since 2007, 81 percent of membership growth has come from just 18 of 133 reporting world areas (13 percent). It is worth noting that growth in the church has historically been uneven as movements of God spread around the world.

International Board of Education (IBOE)

Nazarene higher education continues to expand globally. Official enrollment figures for the church's 53 colleges, universities, and seminaries total just over 52,000 degree-seeking students for the 2012 school year. This is an increase of more than 3,000 students from the previous year.

Church Planting

One of the more effective methods of holiness evangelism and disciple making is church planting. We often speak in general terms about “mission,” but when it comes to specifics, starting churches is a *must* in Kingdom work.

Jesus said, “I have come to seek and to save that which is lost” (Luke 19:10). The church should keep in mind that “seek” is an *active* verb.

Starting churches does not always get the attention it deserves, but it can be an effective means of reaching individuals and families with the gospel of Jesus Christ and engaging them in Christian service.

Church planting is one of the most difficult—yet one of the most rewarding—ways we answer God’s call to be His witnesses to a lost and hurting world.

I speak not as a distant observer but as a former church-planting pastor.

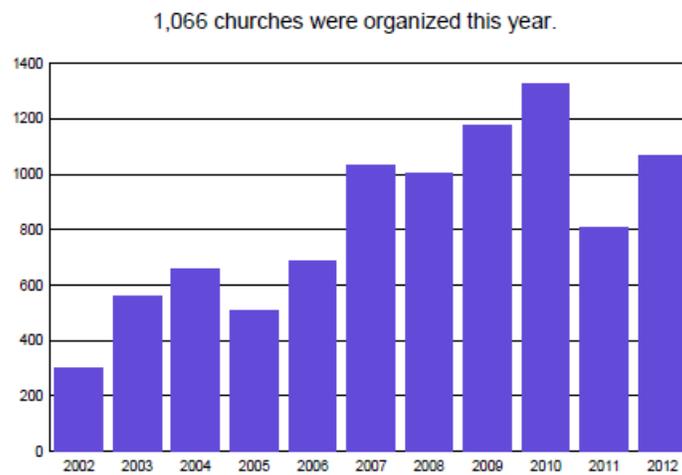
Our Wesleyan-holiness lineage of having revivals, many on the circuit, should inspire us to renew our commitment to church-planting evangelism. Out of these revivals “churches began in houses, barns, groves, schoolhouses, and yes, even taverns,” according to Carl Bangs’ biography of Phineas Bresee, the first general superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene.¹

This is how scriptural holiness and the radical optimism of grace were spread throughout the land.

The preaching and testimony of the Wesleyan doctrine and the experience of Christian perfection in these revivals touched the lives of the Bresee family.²

Looking back on 2012, we find that:

- 1,066 churches were organized last year—an increase of 259, or a 25 percent gain. For this incredible progress we offer praise and thanksgiving to God, who makes things grow, and to all involved in this ministry—especially pastors and their families, who put so much on the line to help make this happen.



Church planting is a high priority for each Global Mission region. Goals and target locations are established for the coming year. Several regions have involved youth and young adults in their planning.

Keep in mind that we are not just planting churches; we are planting *Nazarene* churches in which holiness theology, mission, and the Great Commandment come together.

Each new church has its own story of prayer, sacrifice, struggle, and fruitfulness. Let me share some stories of God's amazing grace.

Asia-Pacific Region (Sunday evening pre-recorded)

The first church-planting story comes from Papua, New Guinea. It is told by Harmon Schmelzenbach, strategy coordinator for the Melanesia and South Pacific Fields, in the Asia-Pacific Region:

This last year our Papua New Guinea Islands district superintendent and team leaders were finishing up a couple of intense weeks of training deep in the interior of the rugged island of Bougainville. They knew that in order to catch the only flight out in many days, they would want to leave by four-wheel-drive truck no later than 2 a.m. to give themselves plenty of time.

Everyone was loaded up and heading out by 2 a.m., but soon their journey was slowed with changing multiple flat tires, getting stuck in the deep mud from tropical storms, and fording flooded rivers. They pulled into the small town of Buka just in time to see their airplane disappearing into the distant sky. It was Saturday, and there was no other way out of these islands for two days.

The men found a place to stay for a small fee, and after visiting with the owner of the humble house, they explained that they were Christians and that tomorrow was Sunday, and ... "Would it be possible to gather a few people for a church service at your house in the morning?"

The man was not sure what to say, so he said yes. Off to the market they went, splitting up as they began talking to anyone who would listen. By mid-morning the next day, a large crowd of people had gathered at the house of the surprised man, a church service was held, and the love and forgiveness and hope that can only be found through Christ were shared.

Many people accepted the Lord, and a large number gathered afterwards, asking what to do now. The men decided that this was the reason they had missed the airplane. By the time they left the next day, a Nazarene church had been planted and arrangements had been made to get a Bible college student to come as soon as possible to be the first pastor of this new, growing church.

God is always at work and inviting us to join Him if we are willing to expect the unexpected.

USA/Canada Region (Sunday evening pre-recorded)

The next story comes from the USA/Canada Region. We are going to learn what God is doing at Northpoint Community Church of the Nazarene in Beaumont, Texas, USA. The church plant is located on the South Texas District, where Duane Srader is superintendent.

Co-pastors Chris and Lynnlee Moser interned at Trinity Church of the Nazarene in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA, when I was pastor there.

Here are the Mosers:

We rolled into Beaumont, Texas, the last weekend of June 2011. What an overwhelming feeling this was for us. We knew of some people living there who were friends of friends, and we had one personal contact of someone we knew from previous years of ministry.

Often times we would look at each other and ask, “How do you start a church from nothing?” We knew the answer in our hearts—only by the grace of God.

We hit the ground running with the understanding that if God was going to build a church from nothing, we were the instruments He was going to use.

Our prayer force (which was continuing to grow in numbers weekly) was asked to pray very specifically that the Lord would give us God-appointed conversations each and every day. It was incredible to see Him answer this prayer.

Before we knew it, we were connecting with people at the local donut store, at our community pool, at our son's sports games, and with people in coffee shops. Almost everywhere we went, we encountered an opportunity to connect with someone. Our ears were always open for a chance to introduce ourselves to anyone who seemed interested and explain why we had moved to town.

Before too long, we were inviting individuals and couples to our home for dinner. We were meeting people for coffee and play dates with our kids. God was opening up the floodgates, and we were riding on the wave of His presence in our community.

Sharing our vision for Northpoint became second nature to us, and over the course of six months, we saw God form a launch team out of absolutely nothing.

One day, as a Work and Witness team was doing demolition work on our front lobby, a couple pulled into the parking lot. They walked in and shared that they had been living in town for about a year and had been searching to connect with a church. They were Nazarenes and over the years had been a part of several church plants.

On this particular day, after seeing the Work and Witness team's van that had the name "Nazarene" on it, they decided to take a chance and stop by to see what

was going on. They joined our launch team the next week. Cindy now serves as our office administrator, and Gary is our head usher.

Over the next several months leading up to the launch, we hosted numerous block parties and community events, including Kidsanity, which welcomed 72 children from our community for a four-day summer event. Launch Sunday was a great day for us as over 200 people joined us for worship.

From the very beginning of Northpoint's journey, we have prayed—and continue to pray—for diversity in our congregation. Praise God, He is answering our prayers! God is shaping the church to reflect our community.

We believe that prayer is still the answer for a broken and hurting world. Prayer is the answer for our churches, and prayer is what is going to take a church that was nonexistent and make it into a place where God's transforming power is at work.

It is important to say that this has been a collective effort of the South Texas District. We are grateful for all the pastors and churches that have been so willing to give of their time, resources, and prayers for our launch.

Our story is far from over, but what an adventure it has been! We praise God for what He is doing. We believe the best is yet to come as we journey through the story being written at Northpoint Community Church of the Nazarene.

South America Region (online only pre-recorded)

Next we are going to hear from Pastor María Alejandrina Santos Albórniz de Rivera. The story comes to us from the city of Mendoza on the Argentina Cuyo District in the South America Region. This is a testimony of God's healing in her life and her adventure in faith as a church-planting pastor. I am privileged to have ordained Pastor María:

In 1969 María Alejandrina was diagnosed with leukemia and tuberculosis, for which she was hospitalized and received medical attention. Feeling great despair and immersed in family troubles, she decided to end her life. She had never heard the story of salvation, and her hope was set on idolatry and witchcraft.

Consumed with depression, she decided to prepare a poison drink, believing this would be the way to end the problems in her life. However, as timing would have it, at the very moment she was going to drink the poison, her children—Margarita who was seven years old, and Robert, four—let out a scream, causing her to postpone her decision.

The following day while she was contemplating whether to go through with her plan, she decided to turn on the radio to station LV10, where *The Nazarene Hour* was being broadcast. Dr. Honorato Reza was preaching about how the sick are healed, the blind given sight, the deaf made to hear, the paralyzed enabled to jump, and the dead brought back to life. At first she thought he was speaking about witchcraft.

Dr. Honorato extended an invitation to visit the Nazarene church located at 930 Colón Street, San José, or his mission on Chile Street and Murialdo. With much difficulty, María Alejandrina went to the meeting at the mission. She arrived while Missionary Victor Eduardo and a brother at the mission were greeting guests. She mentioned that she was very sick and wanted to be healed. The pastor looked at her and asked her with determination if she believed God could heal her. Her answer was affirmative.

Upon uttering the prayer of faith, María Alejandrina could not repeat the phrase “Lord Jesus.” After a while, with help and encouragement from the pastor, she was finally able to complete the prayer. This is when she felt a zing throughout her body. She wanted to run away, but nevertheless she finished the prayer.

At the conclusion of the meeting, she left, having been healed. When she felt the sickness begin to return to her body, her husband would ask if she wanted to visit the doctor. She refused every time because she had faith that God would take care of her.

After 15 days she felt completely healed, and she was able to go back to her job of picking tomatoes. God had healed her, just as she had heard and believed that He would. Four years later she found out she was pregnant with her third child. They named him Víctor Eduardo to honor the missionary.

After having received Jesus as her personal Lord and Savior, she felt the need to share her message of hope with others. She contacted the Cayo, Postas, Chosco, and Ortega families who lived about 80 kilometers away in the Rivadavia Camps.

From there they went to a place where more than 25 pastors were serving under the same mission that was being led by Pastor Elena Campos. During that time, a church was started in María's house at Rodeo del Medio. As time passed, she opened missions in Cocucci, Flor de Cuyo, Palmira, and Junín, all the while earning a living by selling clothes. She spoke to her customers about the great work God had done in her life.

On 11 September 1998, the Cocucci Church of the Nazarene was established. María Alejandrina would preach to the Cocucci family here. This family had owned lands, and after the sale of their property, the barrio was named after them: Barrio Cocucci. The family was honored that the church bore their name.

This is why María felt compelled to invite them to the dedication of the church. The family was present, and they accepted Jesus as their personal Savior while Superintendent Orestes Barbosa preached. The family went on to make sizeable donations, such as paying for new floors for the church.

At the new location, many labored hard to build a dining hall. This was sponsored by Banco Mundial. The dining hall was open Monday through Friday, and it served milk on Saturdays.

Today María Alejandrina is the senior pastor of the church in Barrio Cocucci. She has the support of her son, Sergio Rivera, who is now the associate pastor. This is where, with the help of the mission, they purchased land, and with the support of family and brothers of the congregation, they built the church. Today it is one of the most beautiful church buildings on the district and has been used for hosting special district events including district assemblies.

María Alejandrina has helped and preached to persons from the government, businessmen and women, neighbors, family members, acquaintances, and strangers. In November 2009 she was ordained by Stan Toler in the Church of the Nazarene on the Cuyo District in Argentina.

María Alejandrina has been and still is a great testament to the power and miraculous works of God. Although she never went to school to learn how to read, God has blessed her with the ability to read, interpret, and explain the Word of God.

Her dedication to the work, her effort to preach sound doctrine, her love for helping others, and her deep love for the Lord have been and remain an inspiration to many brothers, leaders, and pastors.

Africa Region (online only pre-recorded)

It has been an honor to serve as general superintendent in jurisdiction of the Africa Region. As we heard in the previous stories, starting churches entails significant personal sacrifice. Listen now as we learn more about the expansion of the church's mission in Africa:

The South East church development area is located in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the Africa Middle Field, where Reverend Celestin is the leader.

Those responsible for the church in this part of Africa came to realize, after analyzing the challenges and problems the church and the community are facing in general and in this particular area, that the following issues are devastating to the community:

- Most of the churches are worshipping in houses.
- The congregations do not have enough means to pay for labor and to finish building churches by themselves.
- Except for Rev. Celestin, no pastor is ordained.
- Only one lady is pastoring a local church.
- The church attendance is low—less than 100 members in all the churches.

What to do?

- The church leaders called a two-day seminar to communicate with the pastors. Working together, Rev. Celestin and pastors of various churches in Lubumbashi came up with a plan to solve some of the problems by implementing the following steps:
 - The church that is building will get 10,000 francs (\$11 US) from the others in order to show team unity as one body of Jesus Christ, who is Master of the Church.
 - Every church will make a contribution to a central construction fund, which is \$60 per year per church. This money is to be used to buy at least three plots for the purpose of building churches.
 - Buy at least five brick machines. The aim is one brick machine per ecclesiastic zone.
 - Divide the area into five ecclesiastic zones.
 - Combine Nazarene Compassionate Ministries with the evangelism team, in order to achieve a holistic ministry.
 - Use The JESUS Film equipment efficiently while training pastors who will lead the planted churches and while preparing them for ordination. More than 30 are enrolled in the pastors' training program.



- Organize a monthly pastors' meeting in one local church according to the program at the zone level.



- Promote raising animals and helping send children to school.
- Start making bricks to build the walls of a new church while praying for the iron sheets for the roof.
- Start schools in each community with the participation of local people.

What is the result?

- We bought a plot of 60 hectares in Katwatwa, where we will grow vegetables to be used by local people.
- The district has managed to buy plots for five churches.



- Eight new churches and seven preaching points have been planted.
- Now 12 local churches are making bricks for building the temple.



- Seven are almost done with the building; however four are still struggling to get iron sheets.



- Two local churches are making bricks to build a school.



- Twenty-one students are enrolled in this program of raising animals, which helps them to go to school.
- School fees for five students are being paid through the program of making paper bead necklaces.
- A field of peanuts is being prepared for this coming rainy season. This will generate funds for the district to assist churches in desperate need. These vegetables will be sold in Lubumbashi City to get money that will help in building churches.
- Six child development centers are being run locally.
- The literacy program for adults who did not have an opportunity to go to school is being carried out in five local churches.

Our principle is simple: let us do what we can where we are with what we have to God's glory. Funded or not funded, we will do it since it is God's ministry, and He will make it grow and change the situation for His people and His church for His glory.

Pray with us that these efforts may continue to grow and contribute to what is being done in building the kingdom of the Lord in Africa.



Is God always at work? Indeed He is.

This is a day of His favor, even if we do not always see it up close where we are.

There are more inspiring stories to tell. In order to give greater exposure to church planting, the Board of General Superintendents is posting a longer version of its report on line. The development of local churches in Global Mission regions is a vital part of the missional future.

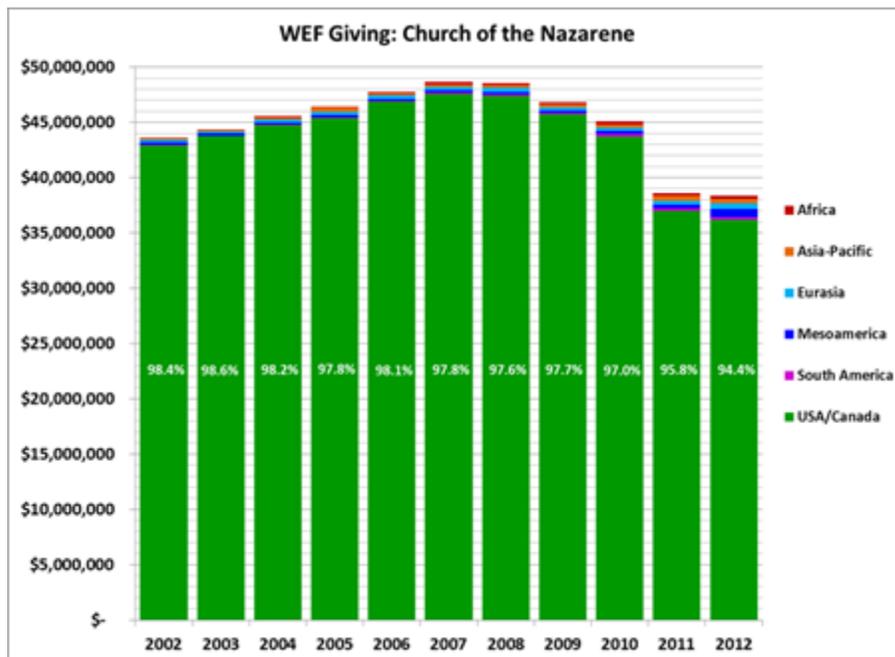
Funding the Mission

Nazarenes were faithful in giving to others in 2012. The financial pressures from the global recession have not gone away; yet our people, with a vision for world evangelization, gave generously and sacrificially to underwrite the mission.

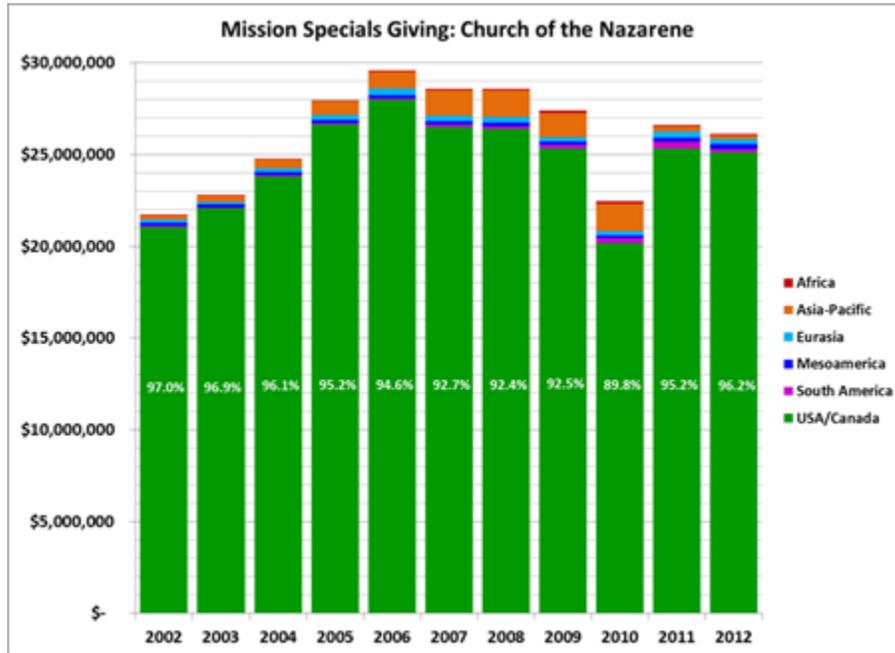
The Board of General Superintendents expresses its gratitude for prayer and financial resources in difficult times.

Reported by our churches through the Office of the General Secretary:

- World Evangelism Fund (WEF) giving stood at \$38.3 million—94 percent of which came from the USA/Canada Region.

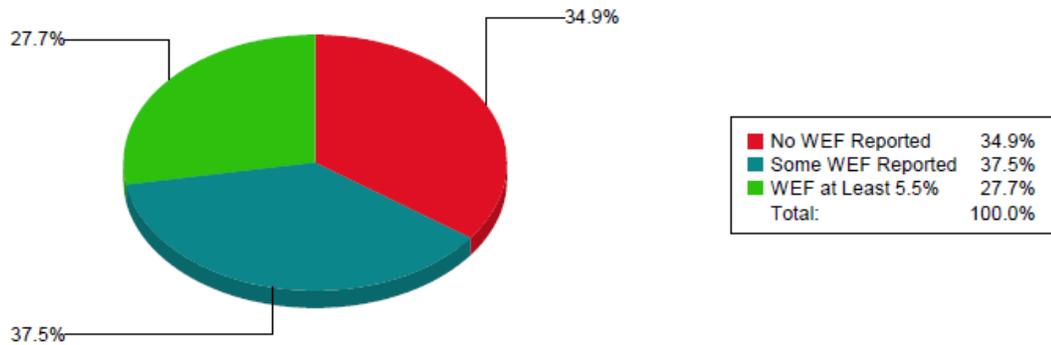


- Mission Specials income was \$26.1 million.



- Nearly 28 percent (27.7 percent) of churches gave 5.5 percent or more of non-missions income to WEF.
- An additional 37 percent (37.5 percent) of churches reported some WEF giving.
- Thirty-five percent (34.9 percent) of churches reported no WEF giving.

27.7% of Global Churches of the Nazarene gave 5.5% or more of non-missions giving to World Evangelism. Based on 18,620 churches reporting financial data this year



Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Missionaries

Ours is a missionary church because God is a missionary God. There were missionaries on the fields from the very beginning of the denomination. It is the church's connectional system of mission and giving that makes it possible to deploy 712 salaried missionaries and contracted volunteers supported by the World Evangelism Fund.

All missionaries, including contracted volunteers, receive support from the WEF system. Some receive salaries. Others, like contracted volunteers, receive support from the systems and structures that are in place because of WEF. Missionaries, volunteers, systems, and structures are all essential to the evangelism strategy of the church worldwide.

On Monday evening of this General Board Session, the church will commission three couples as global missionaries:

- Joshua and Shannon Herndon (Spain)
- Rusty and Dianne Robbins (JESUS Film Harvest Partners)
- Jorge and Ana Betsy Baños (Costa Rica)

God's grace is at work in the world.

God's Grace: Adequate for Our Every Need

*And my God will meet all your needs
according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19 (NIV)*

So it is that we give testimony of God's faithfulness to the Church of the Nazarene. He has never failed His Church. He will never fail His Church!

Allow me to illustrate this faithfulness on a personal level.

I accepted my first full-time ministerial assignment in 1973. Moving to Tampa, Florida, USA, to become a young church planter with my new bride, Linda, was indeed an exercise in faith! By faith we drove our car from our Ohio college campus to Florida. Eating lots of Hamburger Helper became a way of life! We simply learned to rely on the grace of God to meet our every need.

I remember one occasion when I felt led by the Lord to send \$50 to the Carters, missionaries to the American Indians in Arizona, even though I was not sure why I was supposed to do this. Linda and I examined our checkbook and found just \$54 in our account! We sent the \$50 anyway.

The next day I went to the post office, and to my surprise, my college roommate, J. Michael Walters, had sent us a letter and enclosed a love gift of \$50! This was pretty amazing, considering that he was a student at Asbury Seminary.

Naturally, I hurried home to share the good news with Linda. On the way, I began to sing an old hymn ...

*'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word;
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord!"
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er;
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust Him more!
Louisa M. R. Stead*

(Public Domain)

Obviously, we were satisfied because God had met our need overnight! The Carters wrote back two weeks later and said, "Your check for \$50 arrived just on time. We were preparing to cancel a doctor's appointment for our daughter, Angie, because we did not have the money." Would you believe, they needed exactly \$50!

Praise the Lord!

This simple story of God's faithfulness is repeated millions of times each day for those who are called according to His purposes.

Our prayer this very moment is that you will find God adequate for your every need. Spiritual. Physical. Financial. Emotional. Healing. Friendship. God will meet all your needs “according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.”

God’s Grace: Can Be Experienced by Anyone

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NIV)

One of my favorite speakers is Florence Littauer. She and I shared speaking duties at an INJOY Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, sometime ago. As usual, Florence was winning the crowd with her great sense of humor and anecdotes of everyday life. And she spoke about God’s grace.

She told one delightful story about a speaking engagement during which she apparently was focusing on the sinfulness of mankind and the need we all have for God’s grace. Spontaneously Florence asked, “Does anyone here know what grace means?”

A seven-year-old girl on the front row, all decked out in a white dress, stood up and raised her hand. “I know, Miss Littauer! I know!” she said. “Grace is unmerited favor from God.”

Florence could not believe what she had just heard. She then asked the young girl to step up to the platform with her.

“Great answer,” Florence said. “Now tell the audience what that means.”

The little girl folded her hands and shrugged, “I don’t have a clue!”

Our Wesleyan-holiness heritage teaches that God’s grace is a wonderful gift, freely offered to humankind. We do not “earn” it. God provides us with:

- Prevenient grace.
- Saving grace.
- Sanctifying grace.

God's prevenient grace is with us from birth, preparing us for new life in Christ. "Prevenient" means "comes before." John Wesley believed that God places a little spark of divine grace within us that enables us to recognize and accept His justifying grace.

When we experience God's saving grace, we come into that new life in Christ. Wesley believed that people are free to accept or reject this justifying grace.

He also believed that after we have accepted God's grace, we are to move on in His sustaining or sanctifying grace. We cannot claim God's salvation and do nothing. We are to participate in what Wesley called "the means of grace" and continue to grow in the Christian life.³

One writer put it this way: "We should confidently ask Him for His grace without regard to our thoughts, depending on the infinite merits of our Lord. Every time we ask, God does not fail to give us His grace."⁴

The Church of the Nazarene believes God's grace can be experienced by anyone. It is intended for all. Salvation for all. Holiness for all. Concern for all. Grace for all.

Summary⁵

Perhaps some history will give us a better perspective on our mission and the "times and the seasons" in which we are living.

During the mid-1940s, the church faced a variety of tests—not dissimilar to the present. In spite of increased membership, declining growth rates worried leaders.

In the minds of some, the founders' "passion for souls" was being lost or diluted.

In January 1946 General Superintendent J. B. Chapman, in an urgent address, called for a denomination-wide "Crusade for Souls." A year later Nazarene evangelists met in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, for a Conference on Evangelism that focused on the theme "All Out for Souls." The goal was to awaken the laity and combine technique with the Holy Spirit.

As Nazarene historians write in “Our Watchword and Song,” this led to a renewed effort to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness by whatever means possible:

- Revivals
- Radio
- Increased visitation
- Starting churches

From 1946 to 1956, 1,523 churches were planted in the United States and Canada, and membership grew by 86,000. Sunday School doubled from 369,000 to 611,000, and per capita giving rose from \$82 in 1946 to \$130 in 1956.

The new energy in evangelism went global, taking root in the Philippines, India, and Africa.

In 1956 Evangelism became a separate department under the leadership of V. H. Lewis.

Like other evangelistic groups, Nazarenes used technology to advance the gospel. In 1945 the church established the Nazarene Radio League with T. W. Willingham as executive director. First there were special broadcasts; and then came Showers of Blessing in 1960, with R. V. DeLong as speaker.

The program was carried on 400 stations around the world.

This forward movement by the Church of the Nazarene came at the end of a great economic recession and the Second World War. It was time for the church to get moving again, which included sending missionaries who had been held back because of those difficult times.

What can we learn from our predecessors, even though we now live in a very different time and place?

- They awakened to their situation, realizing that the spiritual needs inside and outside the church were as great as ever.
- They placed themselves under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and prayer.
- They focused on evangelistic opportunities that they helped create.

- They acted on their beliefs—which means we have to know what we believe and why.
- They took the long view of mission and trusted God for their future—and so should we.

A Great Commission Church

I want to close with a story that should motivate us to be even more of an externally focused church.

I ordained a man last fall whom we will call José Alberto (not his real name). In 1978 he heard a World Mission Radio broadcast sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene and was converted. Radio is still an accessible and affordable technology in many countries.

One day while trying to tune in the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) for world news, José found a station that was teaching about God's love. When he could not find the BBC, he decided to listen to the radio station that was broadcasting the Word of God.

This caught his attention, and for several weeks that followed, he found himself tuning in to listen to God's Word. He later responded to the invitation to give his heart to the Lord. He says that when he accepted Jesus as his Savior he had so much peace and joy.

He wrote to the radio station for guidance and was later introduced to the leaders of the Church of the Nazarene. Discipleship and training for ministry followed.

In a life transformed by the Holy Spirit, Pastor Alberto is a fruitful church planter, having started 20 underground churches in a gospel-resistant area. He has also been imprisoned many times. Although he has been beaten and persecuted for his faith, Brother Alberto still finds God's grace sufficient for his every need.

Pastor Alberto's story—and those of other pastors like him—is one of courage, humility, and grace. It comes about as our denomination is a Great Commission church with a heavenly vision. What does this story—and others in our report—say to us?

The hope and prayer of each general superintendent—Jerry Porter, Jesse Middendorf, J.K. Warrick, Eugénio Duarte, David Graves, and me—is that over two million Nazarenes will see their lives “as the Lord has assigned each to his task” wherever they are planted ...

... that they are obedient to God’s voice
... people of prayer
... in the Word
... living life in the Spirit
... passionate for souls
... embracing the radical optimism of grace

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted,
Board of General Superintendents

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¹ *Phineas F. Bresee*, Carl Bangs, Beacon Hill Press, 1995 p. 51

² *Ibid*

³ *John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life*, online article

⁴ *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence, translated by Robert J. Edmonson, Paraclete Press, 1985, p. 74

⁵ Historical references from, *Our Watchword and Song*, Floyd Cunningham, editor, Stan Ingersol, Harold E. Raser, David P. Whitelaw, pp. 381-388