



***“BUILDING HIS CHURCH—
ONE STONE AT A TIME”***

Quadrennial Address
24 June 2013

28th General Assembly
Church of the Nazarene

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Introduction

On behalf of the Board of General Superintendents and in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I welcome you to the opening plenary meeting of the 28th General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene.

As we gather from around the world, an offering of thanksgiving to God is in order for His mercy and grace that have brought us together again. We celebrate and give thanks for what He is doing through dedicated Nazarene pastors, laity, missionaries, church planters, evangelists, educators, and compassionate ministry leaders.

There are 1,208 registered delegates from 314 districts who make up the highest legislative body in the denomination. We express appreciation to our brothers and sisters in Christ for their acceptance of this important responsibility and place of service in our church.

Those present in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, and others watching on the Internet are witnessing the fulfillment of a vision from our first general superintendent, Dr. Phineas F. Bresee. He spoke from the beginning about a “divine panorama” of the Church of the Nazarene encircling the globe with “salvation and holiness unto the Lord.”¹

Every Nazarene, wherever he or she is, participates in the wider reality of this vision.

Each transformed life is a testimony to the Wesleyan-holiness teaching of full salvation for all.

The church’s mission “to make Christlike disciples in the nations” reminds us that we are given a spiritual charge, and at the same time we are to be good stewards of all the resources provided by the Lord. The mission comes from God, which means that our purpose is of the highest order, made possible by the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

As our business meetings begin, it is important to say that administration and governance are means to an end—not ends in themselves. As one of my predecessors, Dr. J. B. Chapman, once said, “The goal is God.” Let us keep this in mind, as it will give us the right perspective during our deliberations.

Organizing General Assembly

The 2013 General Assembly did not just happen. It took planning and diligent work on the part of the Global Ministry Center staff, the regional offices, and in this case, the host Indianapolis District.

General Secretary David P. Wilson’s office has had the lead responsibility for General Assembly and Conventions.

A warm welcome and hospitality have been extended by Ron Blake, Indianapolis district superintendent, and scores of volunteers from local churches.

Please join me in expressing appreciation to all who have worked diligently on our behalf.

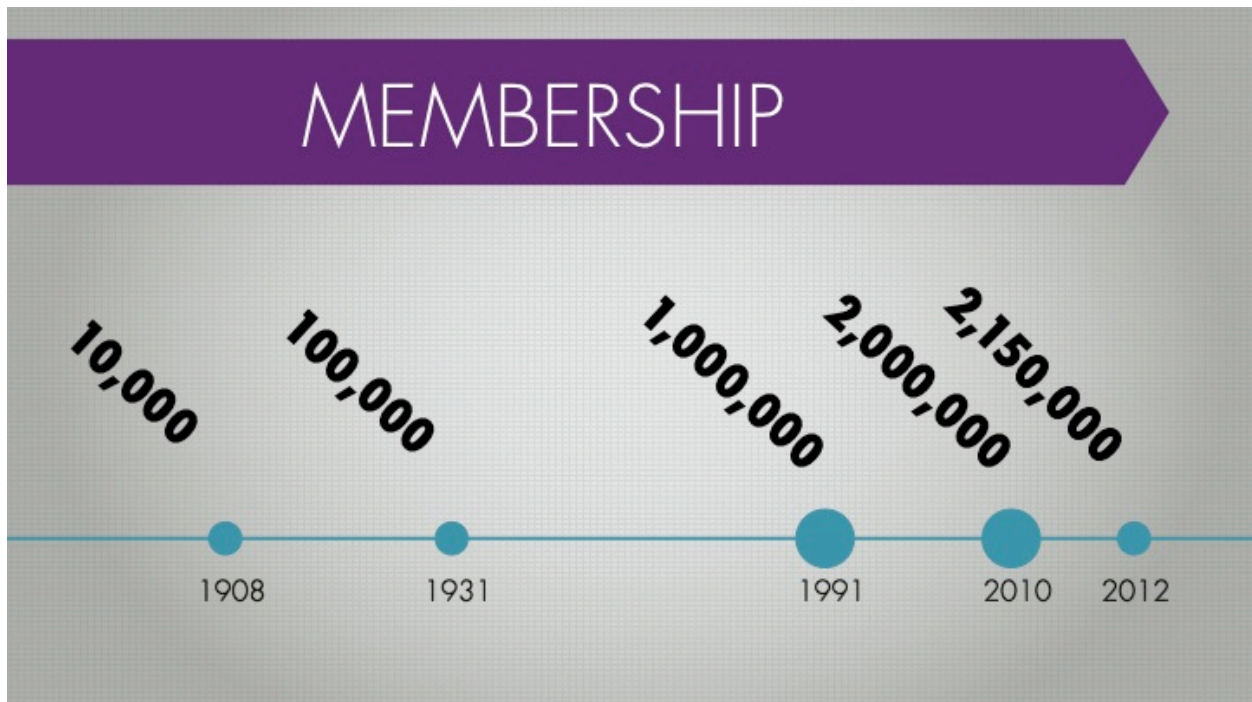
The Quadrennium Past

Much has happened since we met in Orlando, Florida, USA, for the 2009 General Assembly. “God is always at work,” as Jesus says in John 5. The church’s calendar has been full—we trust with the right things.

Here is a look at the past four years:

Membership

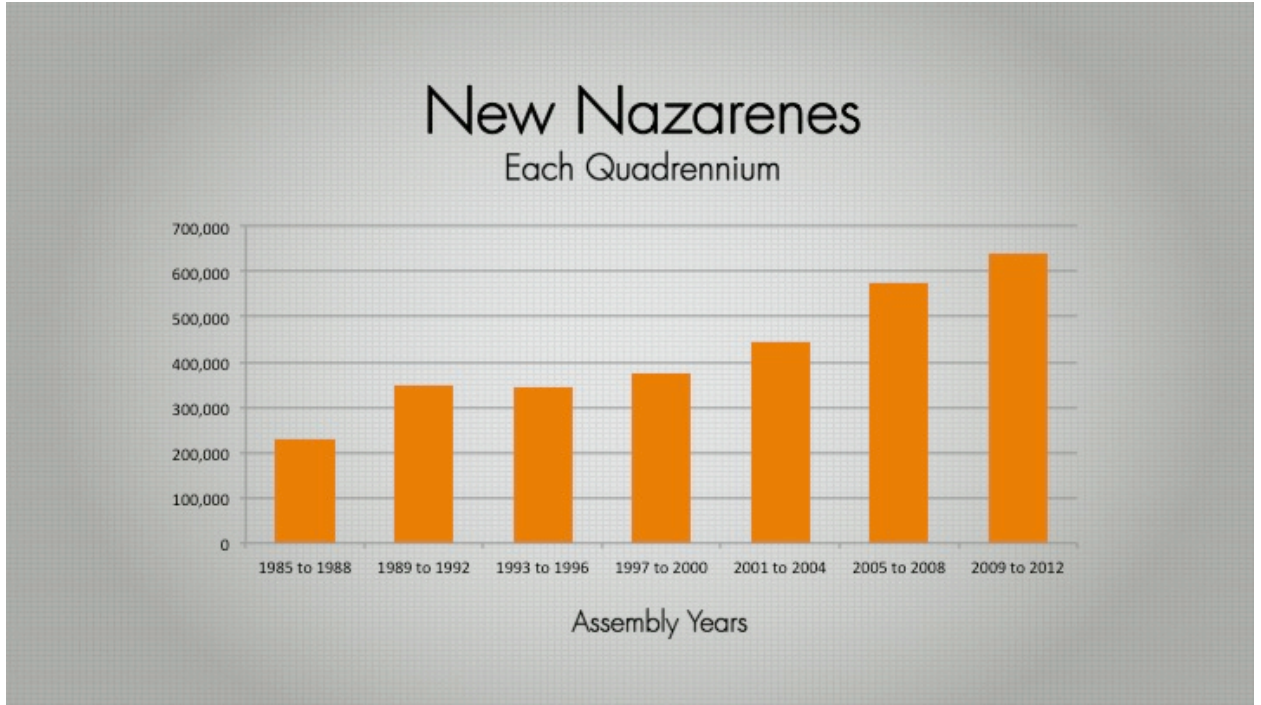
In 2010 the Church of the Nazarene reached a new milestone with two million full and associate members. We praise God for this harvest and give Him all the glory. At the end of 2012 there were 2.15 million members worldwide, with 28,130 churches in 159 world areas.



For perspective, the merger at Pilot Point, Texas, USA, that created our denomination in 1908, listed 10,034 members and 228 local churches.

During the 2009–2013 quadrennium:

- Churches of the Nazarene reported receiving 640,010 new Nazarenes. This is a new high for a four-year period—11 percent more than during the 2005–2009 quadrennium.



- 7,172 new churches were reported, while 1,912 churches were closed.



- A study by the Nazarene Research Center shows that 80 percent of membership growth has come from just 16 (10 percent) of our 159 world areas. It is worth noting that growth in the church has historically been uneven as movements of God spread around the world.

Missionaries

There were missionaries on the fields from the very beginning of the denomination. Today the church's connectional system of mission and giving has made it possible to deploy 712 salaried missionaries and contracted volunteers.

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

It is the determination of the Board of General Superintendents and Global Mission that everything will be done to avoid bringing missionaries home from the field due to reduced World Evangelism Fund giving.

In the 2009–2013 quadrennium, 179 missionaries returned to their home countries because of retirement, completion of contract, or personal reasons. During that same period of time, 79 new missionaries supported by the World Evangelism Fund were deployed along with hundreds of volunteer missionaries working with national leaders to further the mission.

Funding the Mission

Global financial stewardship and mission go hand in hand. Stories from the mission fields and local churches encourage us to increase our giving. The 5.5 percent base contribution to the World Evangelism Fund is a worthy goal, while exceeding this amount helps the church accomplish ministry above and beyond its expectations.

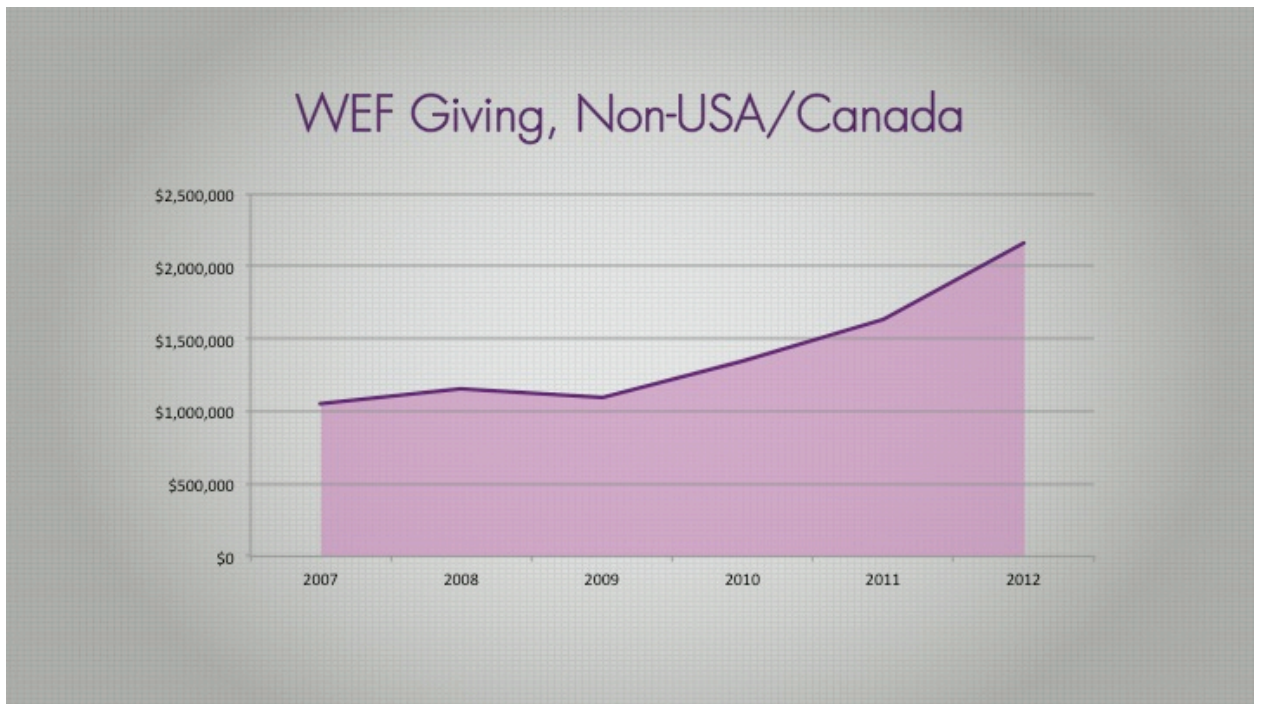
Sometimes this means putting the greater good ahead of our own interests. This is one of the deepest expressions of our connectionalism. An example of this kind of giving occurred during the last quadrennium when Nazarene educational institutions in the United States reduced their own allocations in order to create more funding for Pensions & Benefits USA.

To bring you up to date, here are the financials from 2009–2013:

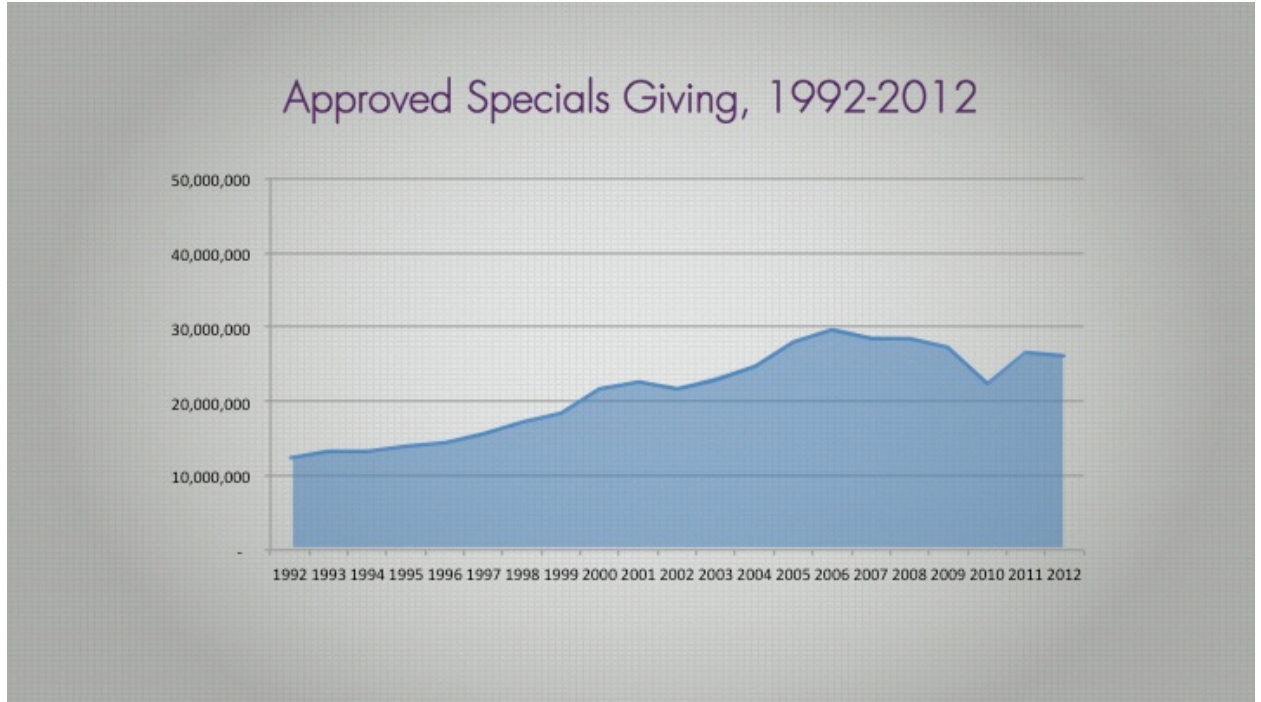
- World Evangelism Fund giving was \$168.8 million.



- A new global World Evangelism Fund formula was introduced during the quadrennium. Giving to this fund outside USA/Canada went from \$1.2 million in 2008 to \$2.2 million in 2012—an 86 percent increase.



- Mission Specials giving was \$102.5 million.



A global economic recession hurt many Nazarene households, but generosity continued during the quadrennium. The general superintendents express their gratitude for these sacrificial acts of Christlike love in support of world evangelization, discipleship, compassion, and education.

Global Mission

Verne S Ward III was elected Global Mission director by the General Board, succeeding Louie Bustle, who retired in 2012. Dr. Bustle is on record as serving the longest in that position and in times of greatest growth and expansion in the history of the denomination. Dr. Ward was formerly director of the Asia-Pacific Region. He assumed his new role in April of last year.

The following changes were made on the regions:

- Filimao Chambo was elected regional director of Africa.
- Mark Louw was elected regional director of Asia-Pacific.
- The Mesoamerica Region was created out of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.

International Board of Education

Dan Copp was elected commissioner of the International Board of Education (IBOE) in 2011 upon the retirement of E. LeBron Fairbanks. Dr. Copp retains his position as director of Global Clergy Development. Nazarene higher education continues to expand around the world. Official

enrollment figures for the church's 53 colleges, universities, and seminaries total just over 52,000 degree-seeking students.

There were 28 new leaders installed in International Board of Education schools from 2009 until 2013, a nearly 53 percent turnover. Nazarene Theological Seminary, MidAmerica Nazarene University, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, and Korea Nazarene University are among the schools in which changes took place.

Global Ministry Center

The recession also necessitated the reduction and containment of the Global Ministry Center compensation costs. This was addressed immediately through natural attrition, hiring and salary freezes, a formal, voluntary resignation program extended to all employees with twelve or more months of service, and a formal, voluntary retirement program offered to qualified participants. The budgeted (non-regional), WEF-funded GMC employee full-time equivalency is now 118, down from 156 pre-recession.

The church is grateful for all who have served faithfully over the years.

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, Incorporated (NCMI) moved to the Global Ministry Center in 2010, where Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM) was already located. Larry Bollinger was elected president of NCMI and runs both organizations.

God's faithfulness was evident during the past four years as Nazarene Compassionate Ministries reported \$32.3 million in income to be used for worthy causes.

Here are seven major interventions for which Nazarenes responded with borderless compassion:

- Haiti earthquake in 2010
- Joplin, Missouri, USA, tornado in 2011
- Horn of Africa famine in 2011
- Typhoon Sendong in Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City, Philippines, in 2011
- Japan earthquake and tsunami in 2012
- Hurricane Sandy, USA, in 2012
- Moore, Oklahoma, USA, tornado in 2013

The Board of General Superintendents established an Office of Advancement and Development, with Dan Schafer as executive director. The new office was put in place to create a global culture of generosity while serving local churches and other entities within the denomination.

Nazarene Missions International continues to play the vital role in promoting and helping to raise awareness of missions.

In 2012 the Church of the Nazarene Foundation moved to the Global Ministry Center. Ken Roney was elected president that same year after the retirement of Melvin McCullough.

The Foundation continues to generate much-needed financial resources by connecting with Nazarenes in local churches. During the past four years the Foundation distributed \$16.3 million to global mission, compassionate ministries, children's ministries, youth, literature, and educational institutions.

There was great rejoicing when the General Board-owned bonds for the Global Ministry Center were paid in full. Proceeds from the sale of the General Church Loan Fund to the Wesleyan Investment Foundation enabled this transaction. The early payoff saved the General Board \$12.4 million in interest payments

The Paseo property in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, site of the former International Headquarters, was sold to The Kauffman Foundation. It is fitting that The Kauffman Foundation will be opening a new tuition-free school in 2013–2014 at the Paseo location.

In light of the church's historical commitment to education, the Board of General Superintendents is pleased that the Ewing Marion Kauffman School will help inner-city students in grades 5 through 12 to improve their chances of getting a college education.

General Treasurer Marilyn McCool led negotiations in the payoff of the Global Ministry Center and in the sale of the International Headquarters property.

Nazarene Future Study Group

In August 2012 the Nazarene Future Study Group, approved by the 2009 General Assembly and led by J. David McClung, chair, and Kenneth L. Mills, secretary, submitted its final report and recommendations to the Board of General Superintendents. Our Board spent time carefully reviewing the information and insights for an improved system of mission moving toward a 2030 church.

Proposed resolutions were presented to the General Board in February 2013 by the Board of General Superintendents. All 13 resolutions have been approved and sent to this General Assembly for further review and action. Several were highlighted on Saturday during the Resolution Orientation and Delegate Commissioning.

The Board of General Superintendents is grateful for the work accomplished by the Nazarene Future Study Group.

Global Wesleyan Alliance

Leaders of 18 denominations, including the Church of the Nazarene, convened as the Global Wesleyan Alliance (GWA) at the Churches of Christ in Christian Union headquarters in Circleville, Ohio, USA. A covenant created in 2012 was approved in principle by the group. This unique partnership was formed in December 2011 to amplify the prophetic voice of Wesleyan-Arminian-holiness ministries and to increase their effectiveness in spreading scriptural holiness throughout the world.

Nazarene Publishing House

After an extensive search process, in September 2012 the General Board elected Gerald Smith president of Nazarene Publishing House. Dr. Smith succeeded Hardy Weathers, who retired November 30, 2012, after serving as NPH president since 1998.

Transitions

The church noted with sadness the passing of two general superintendents. William M. Greathouse, general superintendent emeritus in the Church of the Nazarene, went to be with the Lord in 2011. He was 91.

Dr. Greathouse served as general superintendent from 1976 to 1989. He was a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene in Tennessee from 1938 until 1963, when he was elected president of what is now Trevecca Nazarene University.

In 1968 Dr. Greathouse was elected president of Nazarene Theological Seminary, where he served until his election as general superintendent in 1976.

Another general superintendent emeritus, William J. Prince, passed away in 2012 at the age of 82. He was elected to the Board of General Superintendents in 1989. Dr. Prince retired in 2001 after serving as pastor, district superintendent, college president, and general superintendent.

Other godly men and women who provided strong leadership to the church over many years also went to be with the Lord. We remember B. Edgar Johnson, longtime general secretary, Dr. Ray Cook from Wichita, Kansas, USA, former General Board member; Dr. Millard Reed, retired president of Trevecca Nazarene University; John Ngombe, General Board member from the Africa Region; Paul Skiles, General Youth and Communications; and Ray Hendrix, World Mission Radio and Publications.

“Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15, NIV)

In the past four days we have heard my colleagues on the Board of General Superintendents pray and preach from their hearts and from the church’s mission of making Christlike disciples in the nations. They underscored through personal testimony and clear examples the church’s core values of being Christian, holiness, and missional.

We have been uplifted by a heavenly vision of transforming people, communities, and nations.

The BGS also communicated its seven priorities:

- Meaningful worship
- Theological coherence
- Passionate evangelism
- Intentional discipleship
- Church development
- Transformational leadership
- Purposeful compassion

Challenges were presented by Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International, Nazarene Missions International, and Nazarene Youth International for us to keep reaching out to others in Jesus' name and to continue making more disciples.

College reunions and other meetings involved several thousand participants. Nearly 2,000 children—the future church—were engaged in Bible quizzing by hiding God's Word in their hearts and minds. We should all know the Bible as well as they do.

Families and longtime friends were reunited ... in person ... better than Facebook! Nazarenes may have one of the best social networks ever created.

What makes this unique gathering possible?

Our theology? Our polity? Our system of mission?

Theology, polity, and system of mission each play an important role in bringing us together as Nazarenes.

However, nothing is more important in creating an international community of faith than the person of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is in Christ that we share beliefs, values, mission, and responsibility.

Who Is Jesus?

Who is the Christ in our mission of Christlikeness? Who is it that makes a living faith possible?

What do Nazarenes believe?

“We believe in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead; that He was eternally one with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus united in one Person very God and very Man, the God-man.

“We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and that He truly arose from the dead and took again His body, together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven and is there engaged in intercession for us.”²

The songwriter, Alfred Ackley, expressed it this way, “I serve a risen Savior, He’s in the world today. I know that He is living, whatever men may say ... You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart!”³

A great way to understand the reason the Church of the Nazarene has thrived for 105 years and 28 general assemblies—and then to contemplate the future of the church—is to study Paul’s writing to the church at Colossae. The teaching is summed up in Colossians 1:17 (NIV): “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

In Matthew 16:16 Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do you say I am?”

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Praise His holy name!

**“I will build my church ...”
(Matthew 16:18, NIV)**

This is the reason it is so vital to know who He is.

Jesus, the Christ and Son of the living God, is building the church of today and the church of tomorrow. Besides being its creator, owner, and keeper, He is also its foundation and chief cornerstone. He is giving us, as Nazarenes, exceptional opportunities to partner with each other and with Him. (Ephesians 2:19–22, NIV)

Jesus says “I will build my church ...” How does Jesus know about building?

It is because He is a builder. In truth, He is the Master Builder.

In Matthew 7:24–27 Jesus tells the story of two types of builders. One is wise, the other foolish. One builds on rock, the other on sand.

He knew from practical experience that those who wanted to build needed to think ahead to when the seasons would change and the dry ground, which looked so firm and stable in summer, could turn into a flood plain in winter.⁴

Is the church thinking ahead like Jesus did? Wise twenty-first century architects and builders create intelligent buildings by focusing on computerized design. They also utilize controlling technologies which allow for integration, automation, and optimization of all the services and equipment that manage the environment of the building.⁵

In March 2012 I had an opportunity to visit the Taipei 101 Building, a landmark skyscraper in Taipei, Taiwan.



Since its completion in 2004, the tower serves as an icon for modern Taiwan. With 101 floors from ground to roof, Taipei 101 is designed to withstand typhoon winds of 216 kilometers per hour (134 miles per hour) and the strongest earthquakes likely to occur in a 2,500-year cycle.

The foundation for this building is reinforced by 380 piles driven 80 meters (262 feet) into the ground, extending as far as 30 meters (98 feet) into bedrock.

This was the first record-setting skyscraper to be constructed in the 21st century, utilizing the latest technology. It set a new record for ascending elevators with speeds of 16 meters (52 feet) per second.

Taipei 101 is a magnificent structure. As impressive as Taipei 101 is, it cannot compare to the Church of Jesus Christ. Taipei 101 is built to last a very long time, but it will not last forever. In the end, only His Church will remain.

The Church of Jesus Christ is not about controlling technologies to keep things working efficiently for 100 years or more. Nor is it our goal to plan for a *finished* building. The Heavenly Father is in control, and He wants us to keep our eyes fixed on His Son, Jesus Christ, who is *continually* building His Church. The Church is always under construction.

What kind of Church is He building?

Ephesians 2:19 says that Gentiles are no longer “foreigners” but full members in the family of God. This comes through Jesus alone. What does this mean? It means that Christ is building an inclusive—not an exclusive—Church. It is sad to say that sometimes the Church can be more exclusive than Jesus.

In Ephesians references to building remind us that our church is part of a “great building” and every Christian is a stone built into the Church of Jesus Christ.

Paul underscores several things about a “spiritual building” when writing to the church at Ephesus:

- Christ is the cornerstone, and it is the cornerstone that holds everything together.
- Building the Church is ongoing, with each new stone fitted into Christ.
- A building can reflect different cultures, backgrounds, and generations and still be one.
- Being built together refers to a dwelling of God in the Spirit—not a physical construction.

Who does the Church belong to?
It belongs to Christ.

Jesus speaks about building “My Church.” It is not only His construction but also His ownership and His possession. Similar language is used in reference to “My name,” “My cup,” “My body,” “My brothers,” and “My mother.”

Why? They all belong to Him.

More Than a Building

You may be asking yourselves—what about church buildings? Yes, they serve a purpose. It is a blessing to have a building or structure as a permanent place to gather.

Yet in the earliest days Christians were without buildings for nearly 300 years. They typically met in homes. So how can we account for the steady and diverse expansion of the Church during the first three centuries?

After the Apostle Paul, we do not run across many “big names” as missionaries serving during the first few hundred years of Christian history. Instead the faith was spread through a multitude of humble, ordinary believers whose names have been long forgotten.⁶

So where was the Church?

Wherever Jesus was, there was the Church. The same is true today.

It is not where we meet—but why we meet that matters to Him.

As Jesus said, “I will build my church.”

“Go and make disciples ...”

(Matthew 28:19, NIV)

With Jesus building His Church, what is our role in Kingdom work?

It is to co-labor with Him. “For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building” (1 Corinthians 3:9, NIV).

In order to co-labor with Christ, entire sanctification needs to be followed by “entire obedience.” He wants to use the Church of the Nazarene, and He will, if we listen to His instructions and obey them.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to *obey* everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18–20, NIV).

Pursuing Missional Opportunities

Jesus is building His Church through the opportunities He gives to us as His followers. For over ten decades the people called Nazarenes have responded to His call to “go and make disciples.” As missionaries. As pastors. As evangelists. As church planters. As Sunday School teachers through SDMI. As educators. As businessmen and businesswomen.

All as witnesses. (Acts 1:8)

The years have taught the Church that multiplication is more fruitful than addition when it comes to fulfilling the Great Commission.

As a Wesleyan-holiness church, we believe the pathway to discipleship begins with an act of God’s grace in the life of the believer. “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26, NIV).

This spiritual transformation and new life come from having Jesus fill our hearts with His love. Envisioning the harvest and participating in it are the results of having spiritual, not physical, eyes. With this new kind of sight we see the world through the lens of the Great Commission *and* the Great Commandment.

“‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:36–40, NIV).

Perhaps the Church could be more fruitful in following the Great Commission if it better understood and improved its practice of the Great Commandment.

State of the World

Where are the evangelistic and disciple-making opportunities? They are all around us.

Allow me to introduce you to Nargis. This is her picture at birth in October 2011.



Nargis, now around 20 months old, lives in Lucknow, India.

Nargis was born on 31 October 2011, along with thousands of other babies. The Internet and YouTube declared her to be the seven-billionth person on the planet.⁷

Predictions on how this seven-billion mark would be reached originated from a variety of sources; no one knows for sure the exact number of people born on earth or when this milestone may have actually been achieved.

Choosing Baby Nargis is one way of focusing public attention on our rapidly expanding world, which at times is overwhelming even to those who make a living by studying its growth and development. In many ways Nargis represents the future of humankind—culturally, demographically, and geographically.

Does she represent the future of Christianity?

The Christian Church continues its attempts to reach the estimated 1.6 billion completely unevangelized, a number that is likely to keep growing along with overall population increases.⁸

How will the Church of the Nazarene pursue these opportunities?

Jesus told the disciples in the Book of Acts to wait. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Verne S Ward III, director of Global Mission, describes the process of co-laboring with Christ and gathering new “stones” for building the Church once the power has been received:

- *The missional Church transforms the community where it is established.*
We can be the people of God, disciples of Jesus. Preach the good news that the Kingdom is near. We can disciple believers to be Christlike people. Christlike people serve to change systemic problems that destroy people, families, community, and God’s intention for creation.
- *The missional Church also implements mission.*
Mission is to establish the Church where there is yet no church. We make ourselves available to go as disciples of Jesus. We send out missionaries. We commission. Pray. Support financially. Celebrate. Collaborate. Essentially missional churches find ways in mission to establish the Church where the Church does not yet exist. It is recognizing when there is not a church in proximity (incarnation) to a people that is sufficient to transform the community and then responding by planting a missional church. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.”

“Behold, I am making all things new!”
(Revelation 21:5, NASB)

The Church of the Nazarene is entering a period of significant generational and historical change. There have been times of transition before, but they were not on such large-scale, international dimensions.

As Dr. David McKenna once said, “By the very nature of their role, incarnate leaders must plan to make an exit.”

How do we recognize the end of one era and the beginning of another?

Only God knows for sure, but the Bible says, “He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning” (Daniel 2:21, NIV).

Current times require us to be in prayer, seeking His will for our church. We should be thinking ahead like Jesus taught us to do when we are deciding where to build our house.

With faith and hope in Christ, the Church should have anticipation, not angst, about the future. After all, the Church belongs to Him.

One way to lessen concern about the unknown is to create our future with God’s help. This is already underway in some world areas. Nevertheless, in the coming years more pastors and laity should be paying closer attention to what is happening around them.

In its second century the Church of the Nazarene is likely to be influenced and shaped by remarkable opportunities substantiated by the commitment of its great people, values, and resources.

1. *New opportunities to co-labor with Jesus Christ and with each other*

In various settings Nazarenes will help Him build—or like Nehemiah at the Jerusalem wall—*rebuild* His Church. Opportunities will come from new and existing areas of mission. “Living stones” will be fitted into Christ through Nazarene evangelism, disciple making, preaching, teaching, compassion, and education. The common threads running through each part of ministry should be holiness and love.

In all six Global Mission regions, efforts are underway to move into an externally focused future. The “Genesis” initiative in Mesoamerica is one example of moving into locations where there is little or no presence of the Church of the Nazarene. The goal of “Genesis” is to create ministry teams that will establish and develop healthy churches.

Although we have not been known as a denomination that actively reaches the cities and large urban areas of the world, we do have the opportunity to learn, plan, and partner in establishing holiness movements that respond to the new urban realities of the twenty-first century. Wesley’s Methodist movement started on the premise that the church was going to respond to the new urban realities resulting from the Industrial Revolution. We are at the historic junction where holiness optimism of Nazarenes worldwide helps us dream the dream of responding to the new realities of the Urban Technological Revolution.

Jesus said, “Whoever believes in me ... will do even greater things than these” (John 14: 12–13, NIV).

May God help us not to miss opportunities that come our way through the Holy Spirit.

2. *New spiritual leaders who are being developed; some are in place as we speak*

They are coming from schools of discipleship and learning on the job. Their hearts are totally given over to the Lord, and they are ready for increased responsibilities like the ones Paul gave to Timothy.

“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chronicles 16:9, NIV).

Qualifications for spiritual leadership in the church include being equipped as a disciple and servant of Jesus Christ. To be trusted by others, one must understand the way holiness and humility go together. These are Christian characteristics pleasing to God.

As we enter this new century, the church needs to dedicate anew its original commitment to women in ministry. “The holiness movement was born of great revivals. It prospered from the newly employed energies of laymen and women preachers.”⁹

“The Church of the Nazarene supports the right of women to use their God-given spiritual gifts within the church and affirms the historic right of women to be elected and appointed to places of leadership . . . including the offices of both elder and deacon.”¹⁰

Women not only need to be in the pastorate, but they should also be chosen in increasing numbers to serve on the denomination’s governing boards, committees, and commissions.

The church has built-in channels for development of children and youth. Who will disciple the Bible quizzers? Maybe these young people will help disciple the church.

Nazarene Youth International is perhaps the most global entity in our denomination. Its convention last week took place in 12 locations around the world. We intentionally put children and youth at the very heart of our mission, ecclesiology, and polity. By doing this, we are ensuring the continuity and sustainability of our mission and message. Our intentional passion for involving and encouraging the next generation provides a lifeline that extends beyond the present generation.

How can we help Nazarene women clergy, children, and youth find and fulfill their calling? Prayer, encouragement, providing opportunities for hands-on experience, and supporting rising generations are essential for a successful transition.

Nazarenes would be wise to avoid the mistakes of Joshua. For all the great victories that Joshua achieved, he failed to learn an important lesson taught by Moses. When Joshua died there was no successor. (Judges 21:25, NIV)

3. *New kinds of resources and existing resources that may be deployed in new ways*

The most important resources for the church are transformed lives. This is what has brought the Church of the Nazarene to where it is today. It is how the mission will continue into the future. Ministry is carried out through individuals who have a deep sense of calling, even when the call may come later in life.

National leaders, missionaries, volunteers, and creative partnerships are taking the church beyond its original designs. It is encouraging to think about a wider mission engagement that includes students from Nazarene colleges.

Even as sources of giving broaden beyond the World Evangelism Fund, the *base* of financial support for the mission should continue to be tithes and offerings. Giving is not about money. It is about discipleship and stewardship. God owns it all, not just 10 percent.

Being an international church is challenging, but it has many potential benefits if we know what they are and how to employ them.

4. *A variety of new technologies*

The church has relied on technology since its inception. The latest printing techniques, when affordable, have been put in place by Nazarene Publishing House. For years radio was used innovatively to broadcast *Showers of Blessing* around the world. Even today, other Nazarene radio programs are heard in many countries

Now the Internet and digital technologies are used increasingly. In fact, historians may look at the 28th General Assembly as the first social media general assembly, with tweets and texting as primary methods of communication.

Facebook has more than a billion monthly active users, including the Board of General Superintendents. Approximately 80 percent of those using Facebook are outside the US and Canada.¹¹

It is a mobile world.

Globalization and technology go together, and for younger generations, they are as natural as breathing.

What does this mean for the church? There are already on-line gatherings for Bible study. More are coming. Educational opportunities will expand globally. Children in developing countries are going to school using tablets. Is this how they will read and study the Bible?

Over 100 water wells were drilled in Africa, South Asia, and Haiti through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries-sponsored efforts, using locally-accessible and sustainable technologies.

The church should take advantage of the newest technologies as it has in the past, but it should not allow these expanding possibilities to replace sound doctrine or the personal touch that comes from local ministry.

5. *A new effort to bring our Wesleyan-holiness theology and our mission closer together*

Theology and mission are inseparable. Entire sanctification and making Christlike disciples go together. Each makes the other possible. Holiness *is* Christlikeness.

Most of the 640,000 new Nazarenes this last quadrennium have little or no background in church doctrines and the Wesleyan understanding of Scripture.

There is a continual need to ask and answer the question, “Why the Church of the Nazarene?” In a period of major generational change, there is a compelling urgency to clarify why our denomination exists.

The church's beliefs and practices need to be put in plain language for a projected faith goal of five million Nazarenes by 2030—or many more, from the faith vantage point of many of us. Eighty-five percent of these could be from outside the USA/Canada Region.

6. *New outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon His Church that help form us into the likeness of Christ, make it possible to love our neighbor as ourselves, and bear fruit that will last*

Unless this happens nothing else matters.

Let it begin with me.

It is God's Spirit that makes everything possible. Nazarenes are a church of the Holy Spirit. Many denominations worldwide are embracing the language of holiness. Even some religions that appeal to the postmodern mindset are focusing on holy living as a means to attract new followers. The Nazarene message of holiness is more than just a catchphrase. It is the powerful potential to engage a world that is crying out for transparency, integrity, and authenticity on the part of organized religion. Our message is needed, relevant, and very appealing.

The need is greater than it has ever been for our pastors to live and preach the holiness message. As the late general superintendent Dr. Edward Lawlor once wrote, "Our task is to see that this message (of holiness) becomes the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of all mankind in this world of tension."

While we honor our "goodly heritage," the church cannot go back—nor can it remain where it is. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are to keep moving toward the city "whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10, KJV).

Behold, He is making all things new!

Closing Story

In 1979 the Philippine government built a resettlement area to provide homes for many who had been living in the slums of Metro Manila. This new town was called General Mariano Alvarez, and it is now home to 170,000 people. Last year Rev. Stephen Gualberto honored me with an invitation to preach at his local church in the area. On the way back from that splendid church service Rev. Gualberto shared with me a taste of a dream come true for him.

It was to a small house in this town that Stephen's family relocated when he was a child.

The lack of basic services and jobs there forced Stephen's father and mother to work weekdays in Manila, and Stephen joined them to go to school. On weeknights they stayed in the basement of the garment factory where his mother worked, returning to the resettlement area on weekends to care for and protect their house.

Metro Manila First Church reached out to Stephen's family, showing the love and compassion of Jesus and meeting their needs.

When Stephen's father found a job in Saudi Arabia, the Lord blessed them with material things, including land in the resettlement area. It then became possible for Stephen's parents to build a commercial building, which they leased out for additional income.

Once, when the building became empty, Stephen asked his mother if he could use it as a youth center. She had a different plan for the building at the time, but she promised him that if she died, he could have it.

Several years later she passed away. Stephen's father honored her promise.

Today, the youth center, called Power Life Ministries, is sustained by a collaboration of evangelical groups, including Stephen's home church, the General Mariano Alvarez Church of the Nazarene. Power Life Ministries is reaching hundreds of high school and college-age people. Some come from broken families or are abused—physically, verbally, and even sexually. Some are in youth gangs. Some are orphans.

Ministries at the center include evangelism, discipleship, weekly worship, youth camps, skills training for out-of-school youth, job placement, counseling, and HIV-AIDS training. This is also a place where youth can play, talk, pray, listen to the Word, have friends, and be safe.

The former vice-mayor of the community came to know the Lord through this center. He is now one of the ministry's active supporters.

Joshua Garcia, 15 years old, has been touched by Power Life Ministries. When Joshua was nine, his mother abandoned his family to live with another man, and his father became an alcoholic. So Joshua and his brother were cared for by their grandmother. Joshua began misbehaving and bullying other youth in his anger toward his parents.

When he was 11, he and some of his friends started vandalizing a nearby church. A volunteer pastor in the center reached out to the boys, and they began to attend the center's activities.

Several months later Joshua accepted Jesus as his personal Savior, and he was discipled at the center. Now he is an active leader of a small group at the public high school. They study the Bible, do their homework, and encourage one another.

Joshua dreams of becoming a pastor. He plans to study theology at Philippine Nazarene College next year.

This story is an illustration of what God wants to accomplish through the Church of the Nazarene. It is a reminder that a statement of mission is of little value unless we do something with it.

Jesus Christ, the “Cornerstone,” makes it possible for those being reached by Power Life Ministries to become “living stones,” to be “built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5, NASB).

Final Thoughts

Let me conclude this time together with some questions:

- In the coming year will you prayerfully commit to lifting up Christ in all you do so that others may know who Jesus is?
- Will you look for opportunities “to seek and to save the lost” as Jesus taught us? (Luke 19:10, NIV) To help make Christlike disciples who become living stones acceptable to God through Jesus Christ?
- As we enter a new era filled with possibilities for the Church of the Nazarene, will you trust Him to give you greater passion for holiness?

This is our future. “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39, NIV).

This is how we can co-labor with Him as He builds His Church—one stone at a time.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted,

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Closing Prayer

Rev. Stephen Gualberto

Closing Song

“The Church’s One Foundation”

- 1 Phineas F. Bresee, Carl Bangs, Beacon Hill Press
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- 11 Facebook.com