



***“THE NAZARENE FUTURE—
MAKING CHRISTLIKE DISCIPLES”***

**Quadrennial Address
29 June 2009**

**27th General Assembly
Church of the Nazarene**

Orlando, Florida, USA

Introduction

On behalf of my colleagues on the Board of General Superintendents I greet you in the name of the Resurrected Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. We extend a warm welcome to our delegates, to our distinguished guests, to Nazarenes from around the world, and to all others who join us in this second plenary session of the 27th General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene.

On Sunday morning, we gathered around the Table of the Lord as we heard the profound challenge issued by my colleague, Paul G. Cunningham. That service is, by *Manual* provision, the initial session of a General Assembly. We begin our work in worship!

We have experienced the blessings of the Lord during the global conventions and the uplifting worship services each evening and throughout the weekend. We were especially challenged and encouraged by the messages delivered by my colleagues on the Board of General Superintendents.

We celebrate God's presence among us today. And this is our confidence: While organizational and legislative issues require our attention this week, nothing is more needed than a deep and pervasive awareness that the Holy Spirit is present, guiding our deliberations and decisions and directing us as we select leadership for the mission before us.

As we enter into our "centennial" General Assembly, we anticipate His continued presence in our sessions.

Everything we do should be seen through the lens of our mission as a church in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. We must prepare ourselves to be passionately engaged in the work of "making Christlike disciples in the nations."

We express our deep appreciation to the people of Orlando, Florida, USA, for your gracious hospitality during this historic gathering. Thank you for your kindness to us.

We give thanks to God for watching over our people who have come, literally from the four corners of the earth, to be together as part of the Nazarene family. If this is your first general assembly as a delegate or visitor, we trust you are enjoying the privilege of international fellowship. For those watching via the Internet, we are glad you have joined us as well.

Our Board wishes to express special appreciation to General Secretary David Wilson and his staff for the outstanding job they have done in preparation for this great event. We are indebted to you for your commitment to excellence.

A Storied Past (Psalm 16:6)

The general assemblies of our church have an interesting history. In this Centennial year, one is especially worth noting:

The merger in October of 1908 at Pilot Point, Texas, USA, which added the Holiness Church of Christ to the Church of the Nazarene and the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America, took place during the “general assembly.” The sessions were held under a large tent with a seating capacity of 1,000.

It was decided Phineas Bresee should be given responsibility to chair the historic meeting.

In that general assembly, Phineas Bresee and H. F. Reynolds were reelected to the general superintendency, and E. P. Ellyson, president of Texas Holiness University, was elected general superintendent.

At this occasion, Dr. Bresee observed:

It has been said that “there is no timepiece to strike the passing from one era to another.” When history is being made and great things are coming to pass, those who are in the often hard and difficult places, struggling for the birth of the greater things, are so taken up with the burden of toil ... that they little realize new heights which are being won. ... But they whom God leads build better than they know.

So over ten decades, Nazarenes—through prayer, the leading of the Holy Spirit, generous and sacrificial giving, trial and error, and hard work—have built better than they know. The real legacy of previous generations is the things they have made possible for future generations. We offer our deep appreciation, admiration, and respect for those who have faithfully gone before to make the church what it is today.

While it may be true that there is no timepiece to precisely mark the passing of an epoch, in a sense the 27th General Assembly brings to an end one era, for a new era is already under way in the Church of the Nazarene. Even our setting and schedule in Orlando contributes to a feeling of change.

As we complete our first century as a denomination, a global and multicultural future has already arrived, even if it has not yet presented itself evenly over the denomination. It is essential at this juncture that the church both clarify and communicate its foundational beliefs, its core values, and its mission while embracing the demographic realities and evangelistic opportunities that come with a new day.

As we do so, may we embrace once again the promise of God to Joshua: “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you” (Joshua 1:5b).

General assembly convenes as the denomination is working its way through a global economic crisis. In the first three months of 2009 major economies fell sharply.

In Mexico, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by 21 percent; in Japan the GDP fell 15 percent; in Germany, 14 percent; and in the USA the economy declined by 6 percent compared to the last three months of 2008. By every measure, these are harsh and staggering

figures. No nation has been exempt, and there are no promises of a quick or predictable recovery. “Normal” is moving to a new location.

This financial turmoil is being felt by local churches, districts, educational institutions, compassionate ministry centers, missionaries, the Global Ministry Center, and the regional offices. Around the world, hundreds of Nazarenes have lost jobs and homes. Churches and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries are working diligently to try to address these needs, even as they must also wrestle with new economic realities themselves.

Out of this crisis a different financial landscape is emerging and with it an altered church economy. This will impact our denomination for an unknown period of time.

But let’s be very clear about this: The mission of God is not at risk! Some of our plans, programs, and structures will need to be reconsidered, altered, or abandoned. But the mission to make Christlike disciples in the nations will continue because God is no respecter of economic indicators. The leadership of the Church of the Nazarene at every level is determined to work through this with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order that we may continue to advance the mission—to the glory of God.

Recession notwithstanding, this general assembly has the possibility of being a “watershed moment” in the life of the church. We are at a juncture where several things crucial to our future are converging at the same time. This is all the more reason to pray that the Lord’s will be done in our deliberations as a legislative body.

For all that is going on—and there is a lot going on—the church’s sense of purpose and direction put in place by Phineas Bresee, H. F. Reynolds, and many others 100 years ago remains:

- Called to holiness and holy living
- Called to evangelize the world
- Called to be and to make Christlike disciples
- Called to compassionate care for others
- Called to value education and its vital role in mission

One Church—Many Members

The newly-merged Church of the Nazarene in 1908 began with 10,034 members, 228 congregations, 11 districts, and 21 missionaries, according to historical records. The total amount raised by those 228 churches was \$140,000 (USD), with \$12,000 (USD) going to what was then termed “foreign missions.”

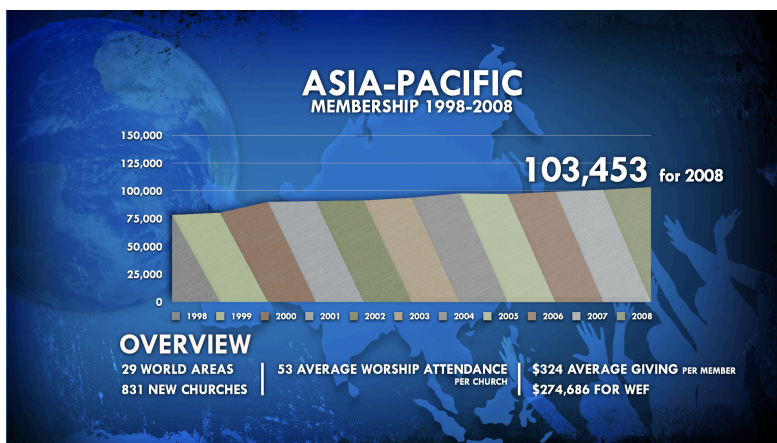
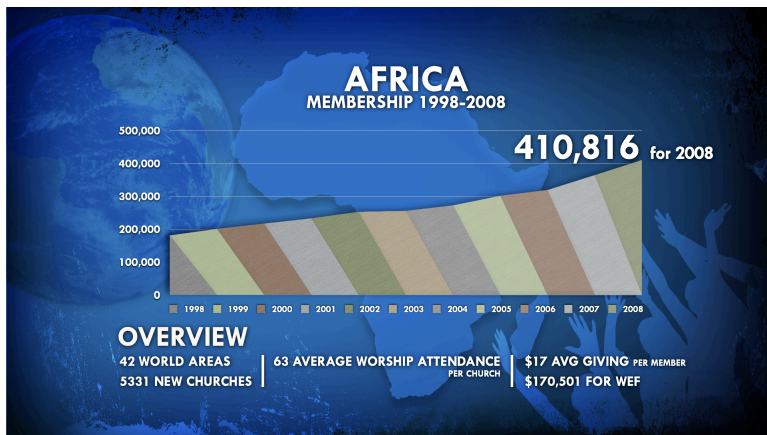
It was obvious from the beginning that the Lord was blessing the young denomination. As the widely scattered groups continued to come together to form one new body of people, they were committed to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification and to the evangelization of the world.

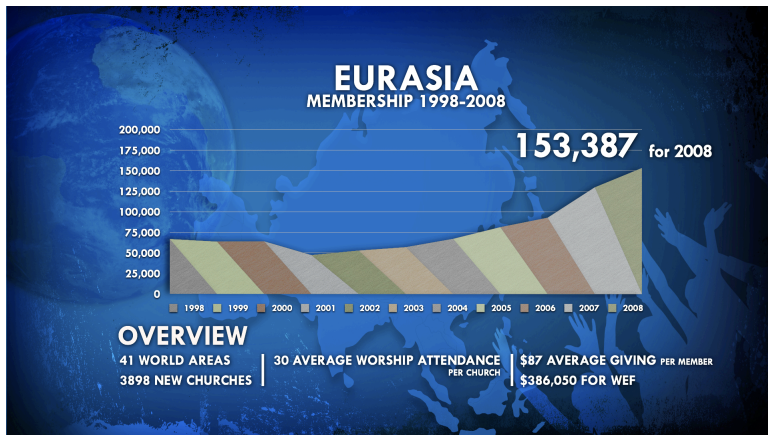
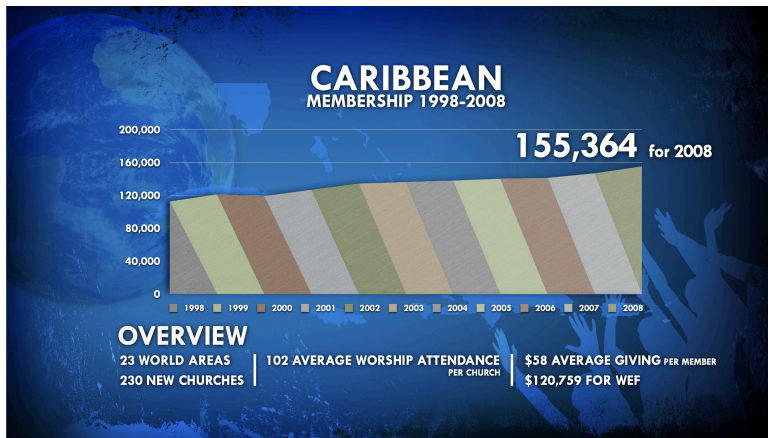
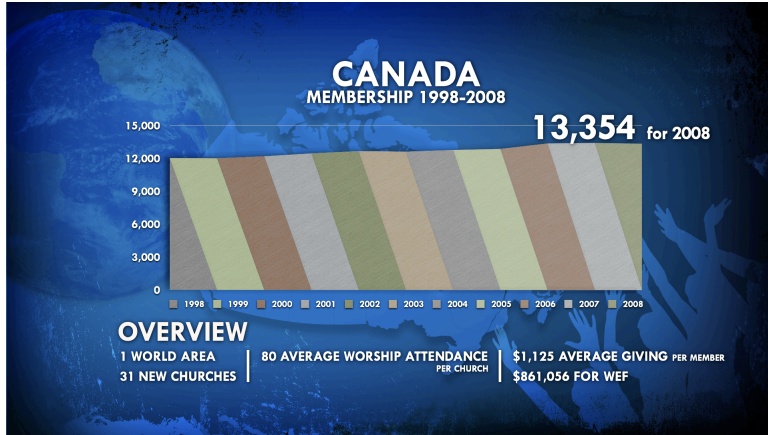
They joined forces and were connected for the sake of the message and mission. Combining made it possible to take advantage of greater talent and economies of scale. These holiness churches did more together than they ever could have done by themselves. It is the same for us today.

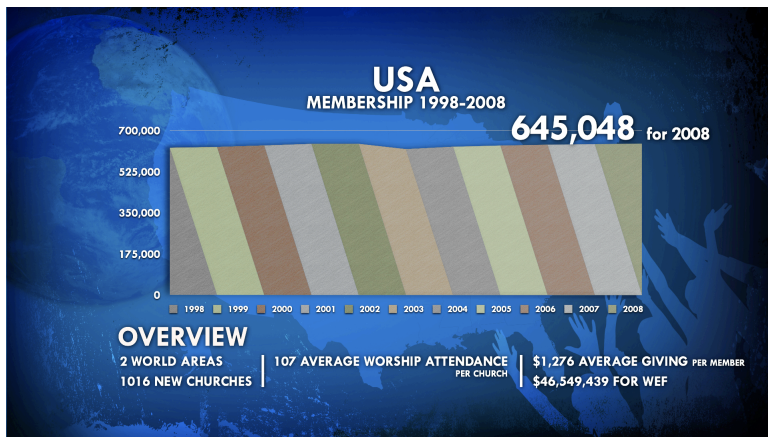
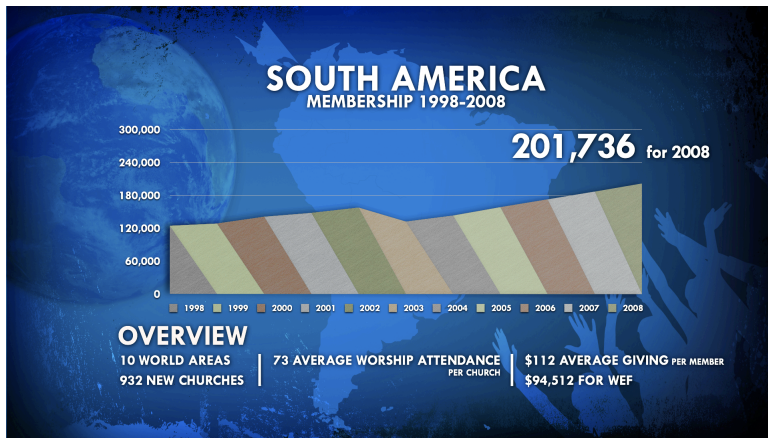
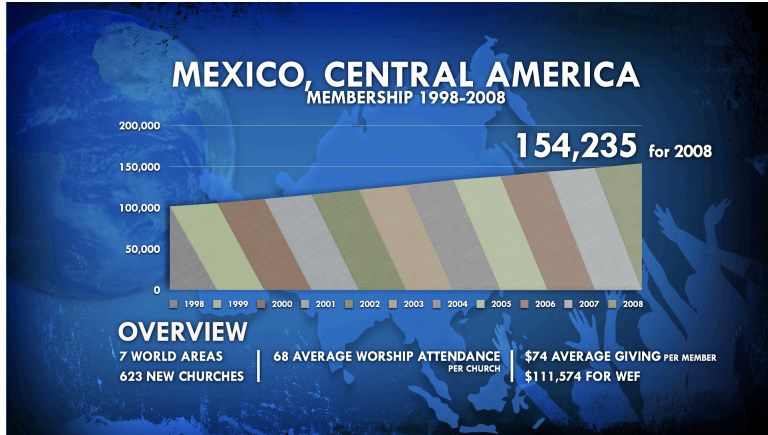
It was their vision of an “international holiness communion” that launched us into a century of astounding accomplishment.

So, what does the Church of the Nazarene look like as it leans into its second century?

In the decade from 1998 to 2008 the church experienced significant gains in all five categories of the Centennial goals. Each region found in the general secretary’s report—Africa, Asia-Pacific, Canada, Caribbean, Eurasia, Mexico and Central America, South America, and the USA—contributed something unique and important to the Kingdom.







According to the latest statistics, 95 percent of the Centennial goals have been met.

All World Areas	Centennial Goal	Percent Achieved
Membership goal	2,000,000	92%
Worship goal	2,000,000	65%
Churches	18,000	121%
New Nazarenes	1,000,000	112%
Sunday School	1,000,000	86%

As the Centennial goals were launched in 1998 there were 1.3 million members. In 2008, membership stood at 1.8 million, a gain of a half-million.

For perspective, go back with me to the 1964 General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, USA. That is 45 years ago, about half our lifetime as a church. Membership then was just over 400,000, 82 percent of whom were in the USA. Now there are more than 1 million members in countries other than the United States.

At the same time, the USA is the single largest reporting region with 645,000 members. For the past 40 years, the Church of the Nazarene in the USA has been adding 25,000 to 35,000 new members annually. That is an encouraging statistic. However, it still sobers us to realize that membership growth has barely kept pace with population growth in recent years.

All our older mission fields, including the USA, tend to plateau over time due to turnover in membership, the closing and merging of churches, and the natural tendency to concentrate more on retention than on outreach. However, the exciting reality is that we are experiencing awakenings of amazing proportions in many other world areas.

The increase in those areas can be a source of great encouragement to the USA church. Even with a drastically-changed culture, there are evangelistic and disciple-making opportunities in the USA, one of the three largest mission fields in the world.

In addition to the increase in a harvest of souls, our giving to the World Evangelism Fund and Mission Specials during the Centennial period grew from \$53.1 million (USD) in 1998 to \$84.2 million (USD) in 2008, an increase of approximately \$31.1 million (USD) in the decade.

Did you know that we are in 36 of the 66 countries in the 10/40 window, the least evangelized countries of our world? Did you know that our mission corps is made up of missionaries who originate from 41 countries?

This is not the report of a dying church. This is the report of a blessed and generous church. For that we again give praise to God!

But what is the deeper meaning of our emphasis on the Centennial goals?

1. Each number represents a person for whom Christ died on the Cross. We rejoice over every man, woman, teenager, boy, and girl reached by the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Church of the Nazarene.
2. These individuals need discipling, assimilating, and befriending. Who will take personal responsibility for follow-up? Who will teach them to expect and to experience the cleansing and transforming work of the Holy Spirit in His sanctifying power? How will the church conserve the gains and equip the people to serve the mission of the Church?
3. The Centennial goals are a reminder of how God calls ordinary people to do His work. This harvest was from the Lord. It was accomplished through the witness of Spirit-filled and Spirit-led individuals in local churches around the world, people who are salt and light.

It was pastors, evangelists, the laity, missionaries, chaplains, and volunteers in countless ministries. It was professors and teachers, district superintendents and field strategy coordinators. They are *the church*. And they are the ones who have carried out this task of evangelism and discipleship. Accept our gratitude for all you do in the name of Jesus.

We give God the glory for what has been done leading up to the Centennial—and for what He is going to do in the days ahead. We trust Him for our future while remaining faithful to our core values of being Christian, holiness, and missional.

The Mission of the Church of the Nazarene

With some of the biggest changes in 60 years facing the church, our Board felt it was time to update the language used to define the Church of the Nazarene's mission. With this in mind, and after careful review over several years, we unanimously adopted in December 2006 the following as the Statement of Mission for the Church of the Nazarene:

To Make Christlike Disciples in the Nations

While the primary motive of the church is to glorify God, we are also called to actively participate in His mission—reconciling the world to Himself.

This is the mission of Jesus, and it must be our mission as well. It is in fulfillment of this mission that we engage in the ministries of evangelism, discipleship, and compassion. This is what it means to be like Christ. This is the essence of holiness.

The Statement of Mission needs to be understood in the fuller context of our unique sense of purpose. This includes:

- Making known to all peoples the transforming grace of God, made available to every person by grace through faith. This is the experience of redemption and reconciliation

made possible for us through the sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood, and by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

- Proclaiming the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification to every believer, encouraging and nurturing them in Christian community toward a surrender of their will to the will and purposes of God. This, too, is available to every person, by grace through faith. This message defines the church, and our mission focuses the church. Without this message we have no mission—without the mission we have no message.
- Incorporating believers into the fellowship and membership of congregational life.
- Equipping for ministry all who respond in faith, and
- Deploying Christlike disciples for the sake of the mission.

We are blessed with a mighty host of dedicated disciples. Our goal is to build on this strength. Our mission is to make disciples in and through externally-focused local churches around the world.

We are reminded, in the second Preamble found in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene, that:

“...the local church, the Body of Christ, is the representation of our faith and mission” (*Manual* “Preamble” to Local Government).

“Church”—it is the first word in our name.

Single Jurisdiction General Superintendent

Effective on 1 March 2008, the Board of General Superintendents put in place a new method of carrying out our responsibility in overseeing and coordinating the work of the Global Ministry Center. Whereas in the past each member of the Board was in jurisdiction with one of the various departments at the Global Ministry Center, it seemed wise to us to initiate a new process of oversight.

As of that date, the chair of the Board of General Superintendents assumed responsibility for serving as the jurisdictional superintendent for all of the GMC and NPH. The other general superintendents are invited and encouraged to participate whenever possible. The chairman maintains regular communication with the BGS on the work of the Global Ministry Center and Nazarene Publishing House.

It has been my responsibility and privilege to serve first in this new role, and I will continue through 2009. Since our Board has seen fit to rotate jurisdictional responsibilities every two

years, General Superintendent J. K. Warrick, currently Board secretary, will assume the single jurisdiction mantle on 1 January 2010.

Relocating to the Global Ministry Center

As of 15 September 2008, the Church of the Nazarene is operating its administrative offices for worldwide ministries from the Global Ministry Center (GMC) in Lenexa, Kansas, USA. On opening day employees were welcomed by the Board of General Superintendents. Members of the Board led the group in a time of worship, giving thanks for God's blessing on the work and vision that led to the creation and occupancy of the GMC.

In February 2009, during the annual meeting of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene, our representatives from around the world participated in the dedication of the Global Ministry Center. It was a day of special joy blessed with a sense of God's presence.

We are discovering new and unexpected levels of collaboration and communication. GMC employees are sharing resources, including personnel, and are finding the new environment a source of creative and enjoyable interaction. And our Board is thankful for their labor of ministry on the church's behalf.

One of the five buildings of the former International Headquarters complex has been sold and the money received. The other facilities are currently being marketed, with hopes that a sale will be completed in the near term.

Celebrating the Centennial

Today we culminate the Centennial Celebration of the Church of the Nazarene.

From founding heroes of the faith in India, Cape Verde, Guatemala, Cuba, Canada, Mexico, and Japan ... to those pioneers in the newest nations entered just this year—Guinea Conakry, Moldova, Niger, and Norway—we have been, and are, a people consumed with a missional heritage and passion.

The Centennial gave us reason to reexamine our message. On Centennial Sunday around the globe in 24 time zones, local churches in 151 nations read from the same scripture in 1 Peter 2:9–10: “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.”

The Centennial gave us reason to reexamine our diversity of languages, nationalities, cultures, and worship styles. We celebrated our one purpose in global evangelism and our one message in holiness of heart and life. We joined in unity around the world through the commonality of the cup and the bread as over 21,000 local congregations participated in the Lord's Supper together.

The Centennial gave us reason to communicate our Articles of Faith, baptize new believers, receive new Nazarenes into church membership, organize new churches, and reach out to our communities in ministry and service. The Centennial gave us reason to celebrate, and celebrate we did!

Our Board of General Superintendents was honored to join in the celebration from Ethiopia to Kansas, USA to New Zealand, knowing that Nazarenes everywhere were uniting with us in a joyous spirit of celebration.

I was privileged to be in New Zealand for the largest Nazarene worship service ever conducted in that nation. Churches combined for a multicultural worship celebration with music presented by Samoan, Korean, and Indian groups. Young people from 18 nations proudly brought their flags to the front of the auditorium. The scripture was read in 13 languages.

What an international representation in New Zealand of what was taking place around the world! Truly out of many, we are one; out of one, we are many.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Gay Leonard, director of the Centennial Celebration, and her capable team of international coordinators as well as NPH and America's Christian Credit Union for their generous contributions to help underwrite the Centennial.

Praise God for 100 years of His faithfulness to the Church of the Nazarene and for the bright future He is promising as we enter into our next century, recommitted with new passion "to make Christlike disciples in the nations."

Global Ministry Center Assessment

As the global financial crisis began spreading in the fall of 2008, the Board of General Superintendents, working with General Secretary David Wilson and General Treasurer Marilyn McCool, conducted the initial phase of a situation assessment of the work of the Global Ministry Center.

Three things are influencing revenue forecasting and expense budgeting for our mission:

- The decline of the global economy and a possible prolonged recovery
- Changes in the denomination's unified giving formula and its anticipated reduction in revenue
- Restructuring at the Global Ministry Center and regional offices around mission priorities, a more efficient administrative system, and reduced staffing levels

Internally the Global Ministry Center is facing:

- Decreasing revenue

- Decreasing reserves
- Funding only essential ministry commitments
- The responsibility for managing the \$25 million GMC debt liability—without resorting to WEF sources

Here is the latest information:

The goal of a mid-year 2009 operational budget reduction of approximately 10 percent has been achieved. Quarterly reviews will be done to monitor actual expenses against the reduction goal.

- The projected operational budget reductions are as follows:
 - 2010 Fiscal Year—an additional 5.0 percent GMC budget reduction
 - based on WEF projected receipts of \$44.4 million
 - 2011 Fiscal Year—an additional 6.7 percent GMC budget reduction
 - based on WEF projected receipts of \$41.3 million

Additionally, we are determined to conserve and build operational reserves for contingencies, to continue actively marketing the Paseo Property for a fair market value sale, and to keep raising funds for GMC debt retirement.

The Board announced the following expense reductions in February of this year:

- The General officers, along with the Board of General Superintendents, will see salaries rolled back to 2007 fiscal year levels-effective 1 July 2009.
- The Global Ministry Center is under a hiring freeze.
- Travel expenses for the Global Ministry Center are being reduced.
- There is a rollback on salary increases among all GMC employees, and a salary freeze is projected for the next three years.

A major part of the budget review process is the employment issue at the GMC and regional offices. At the highest level of personnel in 1988, there were 323 people employed at the former International Headquarters. As of the end of May 2009, there are 210 total employees at the Global Ministry Center. Of those 210 employees, 178 are funded by the World Evangelism Fund. The others are funded by different sources, such as Pensions and Benefits USA, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, and the USA Church Loan Fund.

At the end of the fiscal year, 30 September 2009, the target is 154 employees funded by WEF, a reduction in force of 24 people, or a 13 percent drop from May of this year. This is being done to make it possible for us to keep our mission to the world as the highest priority of the church.

It is the determination of the Board of General Superintendents and the Global Mission Department that we will do everything in our power to avoid bringing any missionaries home from the field due to the economic crisis. There are times when missionaries return home from their sending country for various reasons. This is already happening and is a normal part of Global Mission operations.

But what we are saying is this—only as a last resort and because of a lack of funds will missionaries come off the field. This happened once before in the late 1920s during a time of “retrenchment.” Our intent is that it will not happen again.

I would like for the delegates and friends gathered here in Orlando for the 27th General Assembly to send a message to our missionaries around the world in loud and clear tones. Let’s tell them: “We are still committed to global missions; we are still committed to your ministry. We will support you. We will encourage you. And we will pray for you!”

General Board Structure

The Board of General Superintendents voted in December 2008 to recommend major changes in the structure of the General Board. These proposals were adopted by the General Board in February 2009. They will be effective with the newly-elected General Board following this general assembly and will be in place at the February 2010 meeting.

The new structure will focus the General Board on global policy and accountability supportive of the church’s mission in the following areas:

- ***Global Mission Committee***

This committee will give oversight to the global mission strategies of the Church of the Nazarene.

- ***Global Ministries and Services Committee***

This committee will give oversight to Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International, Nazarene Youth International, and Nazarene Missions International, as well as Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, and Global Nazarene Publications.

- ***Global Education and Clergy Development Committee***

This committee will give oversight to the global educational enterprise, working with the International Board of Education, to clergy preparation, clergy development, and other such interests related to education and ministry.

○ *Global Administration and Finance Committee*

The General Secretary and General Treasurer and their departments will work with this committee establishing effective policies and procedures.

The Board of General Superintendents and the General Board studied the referral from the 2005 General Assembly (GA-310) recommending the merger of the World Mission and USA/Canada Mission/Evangelism Departments. We decided the creation of a new, single Global Mission Committee and department along with a comprehensive reorganization of the General Board is a better solution.

As a part of this comprehensive reorganization of the Global Ministry Center, the USA/Canada office will be located in the Global Ministry Center, with responsibility for resourcing pastors, local churches, districts, and district superintendents in the United States and Canada. The USA/Canada office is under the leadership of Robert Broadbooks.

Now the real work begins. Our Board, working with the General Board, the Global Ministry Center team, regional offices, districts, and churches, has to focus attention on implementing these decisions.

The Funding Formula

The Board of General Superintendents also voted in December 2008 to recommend a new World Evangelism Fund allocation formula of 5.5 percent of current local income for Churches of the Nazarene around the world. It is our plan to create greater global ownership, participation, and support of the World Evangelism Fund and our global mission.

This new global formula, approved by the 2009 General Board, will take effect with the 2010 district assemblies. The formula is based on current-year income. The BGS recommended and the USA National Board and General Board also approved the following United States formula:

Approved USA Funding Formula

World Evangelism Fund (WEF)	5.5%
Pensions & Benefits (P&B) Fund	2.0%
Education Fund	2.5%

The USA formula also takes effect with the 2010 district assemblies. It, too, is based on current-year income.

District budgets in the United States, which are a vital part of the mission funding of the church, would be in addition to these categories and percentages. Each district sets its own budget based

on district missional priorities. It should be noted that, by *Manual* provision, the Board of General Superintendents does not have authority to determine district budgets.

These four funds—WEF, P&B, Education, and District—form the core of local church mission and connectional giving in the United States.

The Board’s recommendation is based on the work of the Budget Allocation Committee chaired by Bob Brower, president of Point Loma Nazarene University, and in consultation with the committee. This committee was established at the 2005 General Assembly.

There is a perception among some that the Global Ministry Center keeps asking for more money for the World Evangelism Fund. In fact, the formula changes since 1980 have consistently lowered, never raised, the amount requested from local churches. If the 1980 formula had been in place for the 2007–2008 assembly year, WEF allocations would have been nearly \$68 million, instead of the \$48 million actually allocated.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of money given to the WEF as a percentage of local church income. The new formula once again asks for a lesser percentage.

One objective in this proposed change has been to have more funds available to our local churches for their mission and ministry.

A comprehensive implementation plan for the new formula is currently being developed and will soon be communicated to the global church.

In interviews with pastors and lay leaders we are hearing a strong voice saying, “let’s renew the spirit of giving in the Church of the Nazarene.” This is our goal.

Summarizing the Quadrennium and Centennial Decade

Some other highlights include:

- A new regional director in Africa—Eugenio Duarte
- A new regional director in South America—Christian Sarmiento
- A new regional director in Mexico and Central America—Carlos Saenz
- A new general secretary—David Wilson
- A new Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries director—Woodie Stevens
- A new IBOE commissioner—LeBron Fairbanks
- A new USA/Canada director—Robert Broadbooks
- A new NMI general director—Daniel Ketchum

But the most important thing accomplished was reaching a half-million people for Christ through the Centennial effort.

Orville W. Jenkins Sr., Raymond W. Hurn, John A. Knight—Friends and Colleagues

As we look back over the quadrennium we note the loss of three former general superintendents: Orville Jenkins, Raymond Hurn and John A. Knight. All three served faithfully and made important contributions to the Kingdom and the Church of the Nazarene.

We know with certainty that they have heard the welcome words from the Savior: “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

A Dynamic Present (John 5:17)

Suffice it to say the Church of the Nazarene is in transition. However, we don’t want to look back with nostalgia or ahead with anticipation and miss the present—the only moment we have for sure. This is where we live, do ministry, and make decisions about our future.

How can we better understand the moment? Here is an assessment:

The Movements of God

A New Testament movement of God’s Spirit continues unabated, reaching hundreds of non-Christians in nine countries that we have chosen not to identify in this setting for security reasons. A bountiful and diverse harvest in certain areas is also the result of a century of prayer, fasting, sacrificial giving, and hard work. While this current movement of God is concentrated geographically, churches experiencing increases in professions of faith can be found throughout the world.

Noted historian Philip Jenkins reminds us that Christianity moves from one area to another, and it recedes in areas where it has been stronger. When Christianity is at its weakest in one area, new opportunities open elsewhere.

At the end of September 2008, USA Nazarenes composed 35 percent of the church’s membership, while African Nazarenes composed 22 percent and Latin American and Caribbean Nazarenes composed 28 percent. The last year in which United States and Canadian membership combined equaled one-half of the worldwide membership was 1997. The tipping year was 1998.

In just one decade international districts’ “share” of global membership has grown from 50 percent to 64 percent. This is part of a wider story of Christianity’s plateau in America, African Christianity’s growth across an entire century, and Latin America’s growing shift toward Evangelical Protestant faith communities, which has been underway for a half-century.

This is an African emergence similar to Latin America and Asia. Simply put, the Christian churches in twentieth-century Africa saw a dynamic at work similar to an American church

experience that ended about 1965. This movement in Africa will likely continue well into the twenty-first century.

That earlier time was America's moment of great harvest. This is Africa's moment—in many respects made possible, at least initially, by the missionary passion of the churches of the United Kingdom and America.

This underscores the importance of working together, in Christ, through His church. "Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. My job was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God, not we, who made it grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6 NLT).

Rapid expansion is also taking place where small churches are considered "normal." House churches, "organic" churches, and other forms of churches are emerging around the world as the Spirit of God awakens sinners to His love and mercy.

New church evangelism is playing a central role in this development. In many places pastors are often recent converts, a reality which points up a growing demand for theological education and training in many creative and non-traditional formats.

All God's movements are original works! Some movements are observable while others are not. Nonetheless, God is *always* at work.

The Articles of Faith

While there is a continuing need for clarity on those things the Church of the Nazarene deems essential to its theology and mission, it is vital that we think carefully about major changes to the Articles of Faith, especially Article X—the "Doctrine of Entire Sanctification."

At the founding of Nazarene Theological Seminary in 1945, the late general superintendent J. B. Chapman spoke these words:

The doctrine of holiness is like the hub of the wheel in Bible truth, and as such one cannot dispose of it without materially affecting the whole wheel ... Doctrine is not a goal within itself. The goal is God and right relations to Him and state before Him. But doctrine is like a highway that leads to the goal. It may be possible to reach the goal by way of bypaths, but more will reach it if the road is well-marked.

The Church of the Nazarene is committed to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification. We do not hold this commitment in a narrow sense but for the universal hunger that exists for it, even though a global church is not monolithic in its experience of holiness.

The church is not defending a doctrine. The church is proclaiming Scriptural truth. The goal is not to promote a doctrine but to improve the communication and understanding of what the doctrine means.

Another general superintendent, the late Samuel Young, expressed it this way:

Doctrine affords the signposts to God and Christian experience, but correct doctrine of itself does not constitute the life of God in the souls of individuals. But if we would direct a great multitude to God we must have sound and pure doctrine.

The second century of the Church of the Nazarene will likely surpass the first one, especially in terms of evangelism and membership growth.

In our church there are places where the passion for holiness as a way of life, made possible by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, has created awakenings of such proportion that no man or woman can take credit for it. In some places we are seeing entire nations influenced by the passion for preaching and living out the message of entire sanctification.

At a time like this, it is absolutely necessary that we retain our passion for the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification.

It is the desire of the Board of General Superintendents that at this Centennial General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene we reaffirm in the strongest possible terms our commitment to and our appreciation for the distinguishing tenet of the Church of the Nazarene. We are a church formed in a revival and awakening of great spiritual power.

We are at our best when we remember that our mission is not to maintain the status quo. Our mission is to take Jesus Christ to the world. And we are convinced that in an era of cynicism and distrust of Christian institutions, especially the Church, the only adequate antidote for the destructiveness of sin is the purification of the heart.

To that end, we are proposing that the 27th General Assembly reaffirm our commitment to Article X in the Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene.

Our Board has undertaken a careful study of this central tenet of faith. We have consulted with faculty members of Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City and members of the faculty of other Nazarene colleges and universities, both in the United States and around the world. In 2006, the Global Theology Conference in the Netherlands extensively studied this doctrine.

Following up on this effort, we are proposing a review of Article X, with a series of adjustments in language that we believe give strength and clarification to this vital doctrine. We do not seek a comprehensive rewrite of the article; we seek a refinement and an articulation that we believe will give this vital truth fresh insight for our people around the world.

Let's make one thing very clear. The Sixteen Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene are a distillation of our theological identity. They are not a negotiable commodity. No one, including the Board of General Superintendents, has the right to arbitrarily reject, alter, or diminish these Articles of Faith. They are the expression of our understanding of the teachings of the Holy Bible. They are the focus of our beliefs, the motive behind our mission.

As all of us are aware, any change in the Articles of Faith requires approval by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly delegates present and voting. In addition, it requires that any changes approved in the General Assembly must be ratified by two-thirds of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 districts in the Church of the Nazarene around the world.

Change in these vital doctrinal statements is not easy, nor should it be. Any changes made must have the support of the church around the world. Therefore, let's be sure that our efforts to adjust these Articles are carefully considered, biblically coherent, and theologically sound.

Funding the Mission

While distinct financial challenges face our church, let's remember that a generous and loving God has made possible, by His grace, a generous and loving people called Nazarenes. We express our gratitude for the sacrificial generosity of our people throughout our first century.

Money follows mission, and over the past 100 years Nazarenes have given just over one billion dollars (USD) to what is now the World Evangelism Fund. This number increases to \$1.5 billion (USD) if Mission Specials of all categories are included in the grand total.

This sacrificial giving came from individuals who often gave up the basic necessities of food and clothing to help spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our Board is grateful to God for those who place such a high priority on giving to others.

Funding our global mission has evolved over ten decades. The base of support for mission continues to be the tithes and offerings given by generous Nazarenes through their local churches. In addition to their tithe, our people are encouraged to give to Easter and Thanksgiving offerings and to make faith promises for missions as fundamental sources of the World Evangelism Fund.

The past decade has seen the incorporation of field partnerships—*JESUS* Film/Harvest Partners, point-to-point cash, and the Nazarene Foundation—into its methods of funding. The expanded list of mission specials, including Alabaster and Work & Witness, is now equal to 73 percent of giving to the World Evangelism Fund.

As a result, WEF has become focused on providing the necessary support systems in order that the dollars given to the mission specials could go directly to the ministry or designated project. Therefore, focusing only on the World Evangelism Fund (WEF), the lifeline of missions support, may be giving an incomplete picture of the church's generosity.

It is very important that we acknowledge the value of the total "mission dollar," as well as the significant and essential role of the World Evangelism Fund. But in doing so, we must not forget that the World Evangelism Fund is the critical lifeline for our global mission. That is the source of the salaries and benefits for our missionaries, the means by which they can give their full attention to the work of the mission.

What is the source of funding for our vital ministries to children, youth, and adults? How are we able to have Nazarene Youth International, Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International, and Nazarene Missions International? It is WEF that makes it possible.

A Connectional Church

From the beginning, we were and have continued to be a connectional church. We are not a loose affiliation of independent churches, nor are we merely an association of churches having some commonality of belief and purpose but no real and organic relationship. We are unapologetically connectional.

By that we mean we are an interdependent body of local churches organized into districts in order to carry out our mutual mission of “making Christlike disciples in the nations.” We commit ourselves to accountability to one another for the sake of the mission and for the sake of the integrity of our commonly-held beliefs.

At this stage in our journey we face the risk that our connectional vitality may diminish and our mutual accountability may be resisted or ignored. Interdependence, which is required for an overwhelming task, could give way to independence. Being “connectional” can be linked, in the minds of some, to “budgets” and “*Manual* regulation” instead of a larger work for God—one in which we join hands and resources for the sake of a wider mission.

After 26 general assemblies and thousands of resolutions, mission can be overtaken by the perceived need to keep things “under control.” The unintended consequence of these decisions is a lessening of emotional energy and ownership of the global mission.

Having been a pastor, district superintendent, and general superintendent, I can attest that it is sometimes hard to look ahead when you are looking over your shoulder. The general assembly needs to find a way to improve the balance between mission and governance. If there is mistrust or a lack of trust it must be restored. No trust—no relationships. No relationships—no church. As a connectional church we:

- Share belief
- Share mission
- Share values, and
- Share responsibility

This is what it means to be Nazarene!

We are not just another organization. The church, from its founding vision, is an “international holiness communion.”

Even congregations wanting to become more directly involved in missions will benefit from the connections, scope, and depth of experience the Church of the Nazarene can provide.

We need to see clearly how the parts of the church are connected to the whole and vice versa. Let's celebrate who we are and build on the strengths of existing relationships, fostering a strong and healthy climate for the next generation.

Remember, it is the Holy Spirit who keeps us together—this is our true connection with one another.

More Mission—Less Structure

The pressing need for a twenty-first-century church is more mission and less structure. As one person keenly observed, “The Church of the Nazarene has built a system it can no longer afford.”

When we speak about having less structure and more mission this should not be interpreted as having no structure. Our founders were visionaries, and they put in place a denominational system designed to hold the church together, especially when it came to spiritual and administrative leadership.

The idea of advancing the mission while contracting portions of the structure begins with the Global Ministry Center and regional offices. As indicated earlier, we have taken steps to substantially reduce the number of personnel in the Global Ministry Center.

In light of the mission, growth, and technology, we must re-examine the ministries and services provided by the Global Ministry Center. Some activities and services will continue; others will likely be reduced or repositioned within the church; yet others must be eliminated. This requires careful evaluation.

What is true for the Global Ministry Center and regional offices of the church is just as true for districts, educational institutions, and our local churches. We must find ways to be better stewards of the finances entrusted to all of us.

As we look ahead, the structure the denomination decides to have should be right for this next phase of its life—increasingly focused on ministry through the local church and appropriate ecclesiastical guidance for the development of a global church experiencing rapid expansion.

What structure remains should be:

- Missional
- Connectional
- Relational
- Flexible
- Affordable
- Accountable

The global recession offers an opportunity to reprioritize for mission. This window to rethink the design of our system will not last forever. Our Board is using this moment to move the Global Ministry Center and regional offices into a better position to resource churches, districts, and missionaries for the sake of the mission.

The BGS has studied the resolutions proposing to reduce the number of general superintendents. With a denomination heading toward 3 million members by 2030 or sooner, careful thought should be given to the nature and scope of leadership and administration.

The core of unity is declared in the Articles of Faith of the *Manual*. “This is the golden strand that is woven into the fabric of all we are and do as Nazarenes” (*Manual* “Preamble” to Local Government).

Additionally, the *Manual* says that the “General Assembly is the supreme doctrine-formulating, lawmaking, and elective authority of the Church of the Nazarene. A second reflection is the international General Board, which represents the entire church. A third reflection is the Board of General of Superintendents, who may interpret the *Manual*, approve cultural adaptations, and ordain to the ministry.”

A major change in the “third reflection of unity,” the BGS, is reason to pause before acting. We strongly recommend the general assembly make this kind of decision about its ecclesiology on an informed basis and only after careful study.

Our Board is calling for such a study on the Nazarene future, which includes a thoughtful examination of the general superintendency and the unique role it has spiritually, theologically, and administratively in a global church. We are recommending a BGS-appointed committee. This committee will bring its recommendations to the Board of General Superintendents, who will then make recommendations to the General Board in time for the next general assembly.

While other items could easily be added to this assessment, the current movements of God, the Articles of Faith, funding the mission, being a connectional church, mission and structure cascade over everything we do. Together, these issues have wide-ranging ramifications for the denomination and its mission as we move forward into our second 100 years.

A Hopeful Future (Jeremiah 29:11)

Turning Vision into Reality

What is the vision for the Church of the Nazarene?

It is to be a disciple-making church, an international community of faith, in the Wesleyan-holiness tradition. This vision, cast in the beginning days of our church, serves as a guiding light for all as we move into our next century.

Making vision a reality does not come about by waiting to see if something will happen. While not getting ahead of God, we must, by His grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, intend the vision to be realized.

A decision is made by each generation to fulfill or carry through with the original purpose of the church. Each generation places its own imprint on the founding vision and mission.

A Different World

What is the most important thing to know about the context of mission in our second 100 years? We know that we are facing staggering demographic transitions across the globe. Everything else is impacted to one degree or another from these trends, including the mission of the church. Consider the following from the Global Strategy Institute:

- 8,700 people every hour and 145 people every minute are now being added to our global population.
- One person in five—1.3 billion globally—is between the ages of 10 and 19 and part of the largest youth generation in history. One-fourth of this youth cohort lives on less than \$1 a day.
- 87 percent of young people, ages 10–19, live in the developing world.
- Between 2007 and 2025, the population of the developed world is expected to grow 3 percent, while the population of the developing world is expected to grow 49 percent.
- Nine countries—India, Pakistan, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Uganda, the United States, Ethiopia, and China—will account for one-half of all world population growth through 2050.

A different world is in the making. What does this mean for the Church of the Nazarene?

Externally Focused

In 2009 the General Board approved a recommendation by the Board of General Superintendents to create a new, single-mission framework centering on developing and equipping *externally-focused* Churches of the Nazarene. These churches must be driven by mission. We dare not resort to mere maintenance in a world expanding so rapidly that we cannot keep up.

The ministry of Jesus was externally focused. The Bible says, “For the Son of Man came to seek and save that which is lost” (Luke 19:10).

“Seek” is an active verb. As someone rightly observed, “the mission field is the ground beneath our feet.”

And these churches must be driven by a coherent theological vision. Ours is a denomination in the Wesleyan-Holiness, Wesleyan-Arminian tradition. We are a people who believe that Christ died for the redemption of the whole world. We believe strongly that the prevenient grace of God is currently at work everywhere. He is seeking to call all humanity to Himself.

We believe God not only desires to redeem us, but He desires to transform us. He can not only save us, He can sanctify us entirely and set us on fire with holy love for a lost and broken world.

These externally-focused churches need room to be flexible in methodology.

There is no one single Nazarene “model” for how we “do church.” We are found in cities, in villages, and in the countrysides. We have large churches and small ones. We worship in magnificent buildings with stained glass windows and in mud huts or out under the trees—and everything in between.

We are in wealthy suburbs and in blighted ghettos. We are in places where war is common and no one is safe and in places where peace and security prevail. We are rural, and we are urban. We are rich, and we are poor.

And there are lost people in all of these settings. There is no single method for reaching out in fulfillment of the mission. Undoubtedly more churches will blog, text message, and twitter their way into the future just as a previous generation wrote letters, sent telegrams to missionaries, and talked on a landline phone.

Even with changes in generations and technology, we are to be about the same mission—completing the work of Jesus Christ.

While not neglecting legitimate internal needs in the life of the church, we encourage more of our pastors and laity to become externally focused—this is your future.

In the recent decision by the General Board to approve our new Global Mission Department, we have put the leaders of all of the world areas—including the USA and Canada—in the same room, at the same table. We are going to work together with a single global focus, with a single passion, to reach out to and win the lost, and to disciple those to be like Jesus.

While it will take time to put things in place, there will no longer be two missions; just one.

Finally, we must baptize this mission in prayer and fasting. Prayer is the one most common characteristic of all of the great movements of God we are experiencing across the globe. It must not be lost on us that when the church in Antioch (Acts 13) was worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to them and said, “Separate unto me Saul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them.”

It was while they were worshipping and fasting that He spoke. Maybe one reason many are not hearing the compelling voice of the Spirit toward mission is that we are not passionately engaged in prayer and fasting.

But have you noticed that in this passage in Acts 13 before the disciples in Antioch would even obey the compelling voice of the Spirit, the writer of the Book of Acts says, “So after fasting and prayer, they laid their hands on them and sent them out.” The believers in Antioch were not even willing to obey the command of God without bathing their obedience in fasting and prayer.

My dear fellow Nazarenes, if we are to see a great move of God, not just in the isolated places around the globe but across the Church of the Nazarene everywhere, we must return to a continual engagement in fasting and prayer. It is the hearts cry of the Board of General Superintendents that as we move into our second century as a denomination we do so on our knees. We will never stand taller in our fulfillment of the mission than when we pray and fast!

Summary

As we mentioned at the beginning, this general assembly stands to be a critical turning point for our church.

If you followed the 2008 summer Olympics in China, you may remember seeing the men's and women's track relay races. In addition to fitness and endurance, a successful relay team practices handing off the baton. Even teams with great speed learn to adjust the pace at just the right moment so the baton can be given to the next runner.

One of the most poignant moments in those summer games was when one of the most capable relay teams, made up of world-record holders, a team predicted to win the gold medal, failed to pass the baton appropriately; as a result, they were disqualified.

In a similar vein, the church is in the process of handing over spiritual and administrative responsibility to a new generation; similar to what the apostle Paul did with Timothy. As in the relay race, there cannot be a successful organizational handoff without proximity to the next generation.

The Church of the Nazarene needs to focus on creating meaningful opportunities of service for new leaders throughout local, district, and general interests. The sooner qualified individuals, both men and women from all races and cultures, gain exposure to the wider ministry of the church and begin taking ownership for it, the better off we will be. Some time ago, Leighton Ford, writing in *World Vision*, offered this counsel about generational change:

Many of evangelism's senior leaders are retiring or coming to the end of their ministries. We are preparing to pass the baton to a new group of emerging leaders... We must identify these new leaders, networking and developing them as evangelists who will work in a world much different from ours.

And we must carefully avoid training them to fulfill only our visions, using only our methods, creating clones of ourselves. We must enable them to fulfill the visions God gives them.

What is the one piece of advice our generation could offer to future generations?

I believe it is the same advice Phineas Bresee and the other founders of the church would offer—take time to be holy.

Someone recently penned the following which expresses how one enters this holy realm:

- Make a conscientious decision to spend ample time in personal worship, in careful study of the Scriptures, and in prayer.
- Work toward a disciplined life that reflects the very character of Jesus. Avoid those things that will rob you of your peace and your health. Walk worthy of the calling you have received.
- Cultivate healthy relationships—both giving and taking—that add value to each human encounter. The connection with God is in the context of community, not in isolation and on our own.
- Engage the larger world to serve and seek justice and mercy for those weaker than you.

*Take time to be holy; Speak oft with thy Lord.
Abide in Him always, And feed on His Word.
Make friends with God's children; Help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.*

With the Lord's help...

- ✓ The Church of the Nazarene will make it through the economic downturn—coming out stronger and more focused on the other side.
- ✓ The church will continue preaching God's sanctifying grace.
- ✓ The church will continue evangelizing and making Christlike disciples.
- ✓ The church will continue sending missionaries.
- ✓ The church will continue starting churches.
- ✓ The church will continue helping those in need.

Yet it is only by taking time to be holy and seeking a deeper work of God in our life that our mission can be sustained.

Herein lies the Nazarene future—making Christlike disciples in the nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May a fresh anointing of the Spirit of God for this supernatural task come to His church this very day.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted,

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