



CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

G L O B A L M I N I S T R Y C E N T E R

BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS

JERRY D. PORTER • JESSE C. MIDDENDORF • J. K. WARRICK • EUGÉNIO R. DUARTE • DAVID W. GRAVES • STAN A. TOLER

December 17, 2009

To our Church of the Nazarene family around the world:

On behalf of the Board of General Superintendents, I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the “Magnificat,” sometimes called the “Hymn of Mary,” beginning in Luke 1:46 we read her humble response to the news that she would give birth to a Son who “will be called Wonderful Counselor, ... Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Mary begins by praising God for His treatment of her and the way He has taken care of the righteous throughout the ages.

The fact that God is worthy of praise for what He will do in caring for His own is a profound truth which Mary expresses as a faithful disciple. Out of this eloquent moment of praise we sense her joy in knowing that the Almighty cares for us and acts on our behalf.

And so it is, that as Nazarenes we come to the end of 2009 offering praise and thanksgiving to God for the way He has taken care of His people and His church throughout our first century—and more recently, during this tumultuous past year.

Our Mission

The mission of the Church of the Nazarene, to make Christlike disciples in the nations, continues in spite of the global economic recession. Nazarenes have been tested more in the past year than in the past decade as God’s faithfulness remains firmly in place.

This is what you need to know as the church concludes 2009:

- People are accepting the Lord as their personal Savior.
- The message of sanctifying grace is being preached, and individuals are responding to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- We are starting new churches.
- Externally-focused congregations are finding creative ways to connect with their communities.
- Needy individuals and households are receiving care from people whose hearts are filled with compassion.
- Sacrificial giving continues to inspire all of us to find ways to fund the mission through the World Evangelism Fund.

The 27th General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene was a time of great fellowship in Christ. The setting in Orlando, Florida, USA, provided the denomination with a historic moment as delegates elected the first non-anglo general superintendent, Dr. Eugénio Duarte, from Cape Verde.

The close of the 2008–2009 district assembly reporting year shows our global membership to be 1.9 million with nearly 166,000 new Nazarenes and 1,944 churches reporting for the first time. This means that an average of 455 people came to Christ and joined the Church of the Nazarene every day last year.

Our Ministry

To our pastors worldwide, we offer our prayers, gratitude, and support for your frontline ministry. There would not be a Church of the Nazarene without your week-in, week-out faithfulness in pastoring our nearly 25,000 churches.

Most of our pastors are bivocational and carry heavy responsibilities working to support their families and churches. The Board of General Superintendents recognizes their tremendous effort on behalf of the Kingdom and church.

Missionaries in the Church of the Nazarene have contributed more than 100 years of service and sacrifice in discipling and developing several generations of spiritual leaders. These converts are now pastors, church workers, educators, and missionaries. Your prayers and generous giving make this possible, and we thank you for being a visionary denomination.

The Board of General Superintendents met last week with the seven regional directors who are part of our global mission. Now that all reports are in, we can tell you that we have experienced the second-largest numerical increase in the history of the Church of the Nazarene. To God be the glory! At the same time, the worldwide economic downturn has made it a year of budget cuts and implementation of difficult measures in order to finish the year in the black.

In the final days of 2009 you can contribute toward spreading the message of holiness by going to <http://web.nazarene.org/site/PageServer>. This site makes it possible to give locally and to the World Evangelism Fund. Our missionaries and national leaders are counting on your support. Ask the Lord to direct your giving.

On a personal note, it has been my honor to serve in the role of chairman of the Board of General Superintendents during the past two significant years. Dr. J. K. Warrick will assume the duties of the chair effective January 1, 2010. I know you will join me in praying for him.

Our Board is always glad to hear from you. The e-mail address is bgs@nazarene.org, or you may send mail to the address on this letterhead.

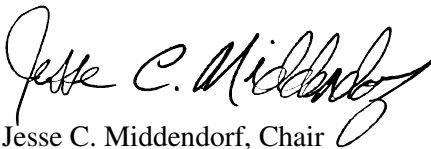
A Closing Thought

Mary was deeply moved because Jesus was her son. She was also overwhelmed because Jesus was her Savior. He is our Savior too.

In spite of all the distractions that come our way, let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus—not just at Christmas but each day of the coming year.

*Oh, come, let us adore Him. Oh, come, let us adore Him.
Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

Feliz Navidad,



Jesse C. Middendorf, Chair
Board of General Superintendents

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