



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS TO THE
97th GENERAL BOARD
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

26 February 2021

**Lenexa, Kansas
United States of America**

"A Journey of Grace"

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INTRODUCTION

One year ago, we had our very first virtual gathering of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene. At that time, we could not have imagined that we would still be riding out the storm caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic. This has been a most unusual year, yet it has been a season where God's grace has sustained us.

Appreciation

The pandemic has spurred us to do many things in new ways, including hosting a completely virtual session of the General Board. This historic meeting has presented many challenges. We would like to recognize the following individuals for their contributions in organizing this 97th session of the General Board:

- We thank our general secretary, Dr. Gary Hartke, and his entire office team, including Kelsey Main, administrative director, Jeff Gray, legislative coordinator, and Sarah Loganbill, meetings and events planner. The addition of new technology and the meticulous planning on their part have made this meeting possible.
- We are grateful for all the interpreters, translators, I.T. personnel, and communication specialists who work tirelessly to provide a seamless flow for these proceedings.
- We thank Dr. Cort Miller, along with Rick Guilfoil, Sarah Wise, and the entire communications department that has worked for months to bring together the varied pieces of this virtual gathering.
- We thank Joy Hartke and the entire team in the Board of General Superintendents' office for carefully coordinating this session of the General Board.

GOD'S GRACE IN THE MIDST OF THE STORMY JOURNEY

As the pandemic developed, we discovered that 2020 would become a year defined by unexpected restrictions that affected nearly every aspect of our lives and ministry. Almost instantaneously, we had to learn new ways to be the Church and respond as God's people. However, through it all, the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ has brought comfort to our lives. His grace has been a constant companion, reminding us daily that Jesus remains "the way and the truth and the life."

In the midst of a year where our calendars changed almost weekly, we have been keenly aware of the presence of the One who does not change.

We watched the church mobilize into action around the world. Local churches reached out to their communities and provided food for those struck the hardest by the economic challenges caused by the pandemic. Districts organized health and safety teams, educating churches on how to prevent the spread of the virus, as well as providing medical care and treatment for those who fell ill. Congregations established educational support centers to help children who had to attend school by virtual means. As a result, stories of hope have continued to emerge on a regular basis, and we have seen the church rise up to meet the needs of both the church and the community.

Members of the Global Ministry Team found themselves grounded at home. For a group of people accustomed to frequent travel, this was quite an adjustment, but they quickly found their footing and discovered new avenues of collaboration. Partnerships across ministries began to unfold, resulting in new and generative thinking, specifically in the area of discipleship within the life of the church.

Sometimes we fail to recognize the presence of God's grace in the midst of turbulence. It is easy to become discouraged and focus on the storm that is raging around us. Grace reminds us that there is always another perspective. Joseph's words to his brothers when they were reunited in Egypt are an encouragement to us today as we continue to live with this virus: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20). Throughout this storm, the Church has reached out to touch and save the lives of many. The Church of the Nazarene in Colombia serves as just one example of how the Church is participating in God's grace during this time of great need.

GOD'S GRACE IN THE LIFE OF PEOPLE

This year, we have been witnesses to the grace of God in the lives of many people. Sometimes God's gracious presence is so near that we are led gently into glory. John Wesley believed so strongly in dying grace that the first generation of Methodists were known as a people who died well. His emphasis on grace that provides assurance of God's love and forgiveness meant that we do not need to fear death. Wesley often shared the stories of those who died well because he understood that to die well, one had to live well.

In Memoriam

We have experienced the loss of a number of spiritual giants over the last 12 months, including the passing of three of our emeriti general superintendents.

Dr. Gene Stowe

General Superintendent Emeritus Eugene L. Stowe passed away 6 April 2020 at the age of 97.

Dr. Stowe served as a pastor, educator, and district superintendent in the western United States for more than two decades, including teaching at Northwest Nazarene College (now University) and leading the Central California District as its first superintendent.

At the time of his election as general superintendent in 1968, he was president of Nazarene Theological Seminary. Dr. Stowe influenced countless leaders in his 25 years as a general superintendent, both directly through his mentorship of young pastors and indirectly through his reputation as a godly man.

He will be remembered for his commanding presence, but most of all for his kind, Christlike spirit.

Dr. Jerald Johnson

Jerald Johnson, general superintendent emeritus, pioneer missionary, and minister, passed away 28 April 2020 at the age of 92.

Dr. Johnson pastored churches in the U.S. northwest before he and his wife, Alice, answered the call to serve as pioneer missionaries to Germany. They were instrumental in the founding of European Nazarene Bible College and helped plant churches in numerous countries across Europe.

He went on to serve as director of World Missions (now Global Missions), where he began to create the blueprint for the process of internationalization in the Church of the Nazarene. In 1980, he was elected general superintendent and spent the next 17 years traveling the world, preaching, and encouraging the church to fulfill her mission to reach the nations for Jesus Christ.

I am personally grateful for the legacy of a father and mother who not only preached but also lived the Word through their lives, which became a means of God's prevenient grace.

Dr. Paul Cunningham

General Superintendent Emeritus Paul Cunningham Jr. passed away 18 July 2020 at the age of 82.

Dr. Cunningham's first pastoral assignment was Olathe Church of the Nazarene, a small church that would grow to a membership of over 3,000 in the nearly 30 years he served there. He was instrumental in the formation of MidAmerica Nazarene College (now University) and served the campus faithfully as its spiritual shepherd for decades.

In 1993, he was elected to the Board of General Superintendents. Dr. Cunningham served on the board for 16 years, retiring in 2009 after 45 total years of ministry.

We will remember him as a true servant leader with a passion to win souls to the Kingdom.

Dr. Tom Nees

A few weeks ago, we mourned the passing of another leader, Dr. Thomas Nees. Tom passed away 24 January 2021 at the age of 83.

Tom began his career as a pastor, and in 1975, he founded Washington Community of Hope Church of the Nazarene. The church's model for urban ministry was one of the first of its kind, and Tom's emphasis on compassion for others began to spread across the United States and eventually around the world.

Tom went on to serve as the first administrative director of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries in the United States and Canada, as Multicultural Ministries director, and as director of the Missional Evangelism Office (now the USA/Canada Region).

He will always be remembered for reminding the Church of the Nazarene of its compassionate roots, and we are thankful for his leadership.

Additional losses

We are also grateful for the life and service of our missionaries around the world. Since our last report, 10 retired missionaries received their eternal reward. Their combined service totaled 356 years for the Church of the Nazarene and the kingdom of God.

Many others who served God just as faithfully also died well, in the grace of our Lord.

Month by month, we began to realize the impact that COVID-19 was having across our global church. In one of our Mexico districts alone, the virus affected over 500 members and 27 died. On the South America Region, 10 percent of all our district superintendents were infected. Let's take a moment to recognize the impact and loss that we have experienced this past year.

Join me as we take a moment and pray for those congregations and family members who have lost loved ones because of this disease.

Lord, we join with the weeping prophet, Jeremiah, in lamenting, "How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nations!" (Lamentations 1:1). This last year has seen a disease ravage our world and touch our congregations, families, and friends. Today, we pray for all those who have lost loved ones in this pandemic. We pray that the God of all comfort will surround each one whose heart is broken from the pain of loss.

Just as those of the holiness movement that birthed our church, may we be a people who live and die well in the loving grace of our heavenly Father. We join with Paul in declaring, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" May the Holy Spirit continue to be with us through this season, comforting and leading us by God's divine love and power. Amen.

TRANSITIONS

As the church continues to minister in these days of a global pandemic, we also find ourselves celebrating the ordinary rhythms of transition.

Farewell

Dr. Bob Broadbooks

Today we celebrate the ministry of Dr. Robert Broadbooks, who has faithfully served as the USA/Canada regional director since 2008. Bob will retire on 1 March 2021. He previously served as a pastor for 20 years and as a district superintendent for over a decade. His legacy as the first USA/Canada regional director has laid a strong foundation for the mission.

On behalf of the Board of General Superintendents and the entire Church of the Nazarene, thank you for your many years of service.

Ken Roney

For nearly 20 years, Kenneth Roney, J.D., has helped ensure the church's work will be funded for generations to come. Through his work with the Church of the Nazarene Foundation and Stewardship Development, he has assisted hundreds of churches, families, and organizations as they invest in the church's work around the world.

During his eight years as president of the Church of the Nazarene Foundation, the Foundation's assets have increased from \$44 million to over \$128 million, and the organization became fully self-supporting ahead of schedule in 2019. Ken will retire from this role on 1 March 2021.

Frank Moore

Dr. Frank Moore has been a faithful servant to the church for more than 45 years. He has become a theological voice for our denomination throughout his career as a pastor, professor, prolific author, and as general editor. He will retire on 1 June 2021.

Over the last eight years as general editor, Frank has overseen the creation of global literature and publications, including serving as editor in chief of *Holiness Today*, and traveled the world to resource the next generation of holiness writers.

Thank you, Frank, for your years of service. We will miss your guidance.

Global Ministry Center

Additional transitions occurred in the Global Ministry Center in July when austerity measures affected a number of positions. No organization ever wants to let people go, but it was a necessary step during this most unusual year. The work and ministry of these individuals reflected a total 220 years of service. We are grateful for all of those who served the church faithfully for so many years.

New Leaders

Transitions also include the welcome of new members to the Global Ministry Team.

Jim Ritchie

We welcome Rev. Jim Ritchie as the new regional director for Eurasia.

In October 2020, the Board of General Superintendents announced the election of Jim Ritchie as Eurasia regional director.

Jim most recently served as superintendent of the British Isles North District in addition to pastoring Trinity Church of the Nazarene in Perth, Scotland. He has served in ministry since 1982, including as the director of several nonprofits.

The Board of General Superintendents and the church welcome Jim to this new ministry leadership role.

Stan Reeder

The Board of General Superintendents announced the election of Dr. Stan Reeder as USA/Canada regional director in December 2020.

Stan most recently served as superintendent of the Oregon Pacific District, a position he held for the last 11 years. A citizen of Canada, he served as a pastor in the United States and Canada for more than 20 years.

His passion for equipping others will serve the region well, and we look forward to this new phase of the USA/Canada church.

General Board

This General Board has had a number of transitions, and we are pleased to welcome three new members. Peter Kui will represent the Asia-Pacific Region. Mark Bennett from the Central USA Region and Judge Wavny Toussaint from the Eastern USA Region will both serve as lay representatives.

GOD'S GRACE IN THE MISSION

This has been a year of adaptation, where we have experienced God's grace in the midst of the mission. Thankfully, technology was immediately available to help keep the people of God connected during this time. We watched as the creativity of our local churches became apparent in the midst of great challenge. From Zoom small groups, YouTube and WhatsApp worship, the

church continued to focus on the mission. The church's online presence became exponentially larger than it had ever been in the past, taking the good news of Jesus outside the walls of our buildings.

When technology was not available, people traveled to towns and villages to preach in the open-air, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Even in the midst of COVID-19, Nazarenes have planted new churches in communities that needed to experience the hope found in Jesus. Churches in Peru reached out to reopen churches in Paraguay; a church in Virginia adopted and reopened their mother church in a community that had become almost entirely unchurched. The church has kept adapting, and in the process, has continued to minister.

The Global Ministry Center was also a place of adaptation as meetings were held online. Along with adjustments in the way the Global Ministry Center worked, uncertainty regarding the financial impact pointed to a need for the development of austerity measures. A positive result was ingenuity in the workplace and a connectedness that improved over time. Partnerships developed among local church ministries that will have a long-term impact on the life of the church. We watched with gratitude as NMI and our leaders around the world found ways to keep the local church connected to the missional enterprise of the Church. NYI connected with our youth leaders, SDMI dreamed about ways to shape discipleship, and our colleges and educational institutions developed new platforms and methodologies for education.

Responding to the needs of our church members and communities became a priority. Faced with unknown health and economic challenges, the church became an instrument of God's grace in tangible ways. Nazarene Compassionate Ministries immediately mobilized to respond to the needs. This crisis exposed the value of our interconnectedness as a denomination because of the already established networks through regions, districts, and local churches.

Throughout the year 2020, NCM helped to sponsor 192 specific projects related to the pandemic with over 450,000 beneficiaries in 88 countries. Nearly 400 districts were involved in these projects and almost 6,000 churches with close to \$1.7 million disbursed. This does not include all of the projects and ministries that local churches carried out without the use of NCM funds.

Assistance to the most high-risk individuals was deployed immediately. This included the unemployed, widows, orphans, single-parent homes, and our elderly. The church also responded

to the needs of her pastors by ministering to over 3,800 clergy families. While current ministers received assistance, retired ministers did as well. The NCM coordinator and team for Côte D'Ivoire South brought food to Madame Lucie Djédjé, the widow of Rev. Yao Clément Djédjé, former superintendent of the Côte D'Ivoire South District, who passed away in 2019. She was not expecting their visit, nor did she expect the gifts of food they brought. She literally fell to the floor in tears because of the love and generosity. She was moved that God would remember her, His servant, and would strengthen her with this gift of provision.

IMPACT ON GIVING

During 2020, our global church, educational institutions, districts, and local congregations all faced significant financial uncertainty as the global pandemic forced most of our local church congregations to suspend in-person worship services beginning in March. Many of our local congregations reported declining income after that time, which also caused declines in World Evangelism giving in the last half of fiscal 2020. However, because of the continuing faithfulness of Nazarene congregations, receipts for the World Evangelism Fund for fiscal 2020 as a whole were only 1.4 percent lower than the previous year. Giving for Mission Specials declined by only 0.4 percent.

In order to meet the financial challenges of declining revenues, the Board of General Superintendents implemented austerity measures during 2020, which included the suspension of all discretionary spending and the elimination of most travel and events. In July, after much prayerful reflection, we also took the regretful but necessary action to reduce our Global Ministry Center staff by 25 percent and implemented a hiring freeze.

As we move forward, the Lord is helping us to find new ways of leveraging technology that will allow us to continue our mission effectively. We also know the year ahead may continue to hold some financial uncertainty. Therefore, our Senior Leadership Team used a reduced projection of 13.4 percent in World Evangelism giving to build our fiscal 2021 budget. Even with a reduced overall budget, our highest priority for 2021 is to maintain our current level of missionaries deployed around the world.

The members of the Board of General Superintendents are usually on the road. However, since March of 2020, the BGS has met together nearly every single week, and often twice a week,

via Zoom. Probably no BGS in the history of the Church of the Nazarene has spent this much time together. The purpose of our meetings has been to remain up to date on the life of the church and the adaptations we would need to make during the pandemic. We developed a set of temporary rulings to help churches and districts navigate the jurisdictional challenges they were facing. The vast majority of districts cancelled their assemblies and tasked the District Advisory Committee with caring for the essential business of the district.

Members of the Board of General Superintendents used technology to meet on a more regular basis with leadership in their international jurisdictions. Some assemblies convened via Zoom, and teaching and training events for district development took place virtually. A few districts in the United States were able to hold special ordination services while following strict protocols to maintain the health and safety of all involved.

One of the rich manifestations of grace comes through the gathering of the global church family in the General Assembly. The next Assembly was scheduled for the summer of 2021, but as the year wore on, and with the advice of Nazarene healthcare experts, it was determined that the General Assembly would need to be delayed. Taking into account the amount of time it would take for a vaccine to become available in all world areas and for economies to recover, the General Assembly Commission made the difficult decision to move the General Assembly to 9-16 June 2023. It is important that we provide enough time for recovery so that the entirety of our church family is able to attend and be represented appropriately.

LEANING INTO THE MISSION

Last year, as Dr. Chambo gave the first virtual annual report of the Board of General Superintendents, we were excited about announcing “A Journey of Grace,” our new emphasis on the life of discipleship in the Church of the Nazarene.

Little did we know that “A Journey of Grace” would become a descriptor of the year that we would experience. God’s grace has carried us through an unanticipated storm, but now we must think about the future. One thing we have learned from the year 2020 is that God’s mission is not deterred by the events of the world. Therefore, we are compelled to lean into our work of making Christlike disciples in the nations.

Paul’s concluding remarks to the church in Corinth found in 2 Corinthians 13:14 are an

appropriate benediction but also a blessing for us in the year 2021: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

In this one small verse, Paul captures the entire journey of grace that we embrace from a Wesleyan framework of understanding: prevenient grace, saving grace, and sanctifying grace, all found within the life and work of the Triune God. God’s people, all of us, are invited to live under grace in the love of God and through fellowship, filled with the Holy Spirit.

We are all in need of God’s grace, no matter where we find ourselves in life. Grace itself is not a substance nor an impersonal thing, but grace is the personal act of God sending His Son to live in human flesh. “God has acted personally. He has graciously taken the initiative in coming to us so that we might respond.”¹ This is why Paul encourages his readers to embrace the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is God who acts before we do. It is God’s love that is poured out by the Father sacrificing His Son for you and me. “And it is God the Holy Spirit, one with the Father and the Son, who works within us, turning us around to come toward God instead of walking away from Him in our sin.”² This is why we remain on this journey, where Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul also referred to grace, “Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham.” Paul is explaining that Abraham pleased God first and foremost through faith. He did not know about the Law that would come later. God reached out to him in grace, and Abraham responded. The same is true for us. God reaches out in prevenient grace to all. This was the promise to Abraham that stretched out through the ages, and today the same promise draws us toward God. Prevenient grace is constantly at work, and we respond in faith. It is grace that draws us into the life of holy fellowship with God.

When we begin to understand the place of grace, we may find the love of God overwhelming. God, in infinite love, has reached out to save all of creation. This is a revelation of the very nature of the relationship that we find in the Triune God. Emanating from this relationship is holy love, which results in a grace that grips us even when we are living in sin. The

¹ T.A. Noble, *Holiness Today*, September 2020, 6.

² *Ibid.*

depth of our sins is inconsequential to grace, for the Father never gives up on those whom He loves. Grace continues to flow, day in and day out.

Far too often, we are hard on ourselves, unwilling to accept the love that God is pouring out on us. God's grace is lavished on all, for God does not want any to be lost. We read about it over and over again. In Luke chapter 15, we find prevenient grace overflowing in Jesus' parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. The shepherd, acting with prevenient grace, leaves the 99 and goes in search of the one lamb that is missing. The lost sheep is of great value to the shepherd. In the story of the lost coin, we find the woman sweeping her house, searching every nook and cranny for her coin. She represents our heavenly Father, doing all that He can to find His lost ones. The house will be swept and every corner searched until the coin is retrieved. This is grace, lavished on those who do not deserve it. And grace is seen in the father who stands on the side of the road, day after day, waiting for his prodigal to come home. He is waiting, always with open arms and filled with abundant love.

Grace was something not always spoken of when I was growing up in the church. The focus often seemed to be on punishment for doing things wrong, and I lived in fear of losing my salvation. As I have grown, I have begun to understand grace as something much greater than all my fears. Grace, which has its grip on me. Grace, which means that God is always reaching out to me, continually drawing me near. Grace that reaches out a hand and picks me up when I fall. Grace, which bandages my wounds. Grace, which whispers "I love you" when you feel you are most vulnerable or the ugliest of sinners.

And this grace stretches out and invites us to become partakers of the divine nature by faith. Yes, it is a mystery. No, I cannot explain it all. Grace overflowing anoints us with holy love and awaits the step of faith in which there can be complete and total healing.

Once we have experienced the healing grace of God in our lives, we are to participate together with God to be agents or channels of God's prevenient grace in the world. In September, *Holiness Today* had an entire issue dedicated to the topic of prevenient grace. Dr. Geordan Hammond placed a poignant reminder to us from the work of John Wesley. Hammond shared:

Prevenient grace suggests that we should hold unconditional love as central to ministry. A pastoral and evangelistic task of all Nazarenes is to preach the gospel in word and deed as a means of awakening people to the prevenient work of God

already present in their lives. The Holy Spirit enabling us to see the work of God's prevenient grace in the lives of those around us should activate the call to discipleship in the church. When we heed this call, we co-work with God to help people encounter God's free grace that leads to liberation from sin and the joyous life of holy living.³

If we are to participate with Christ in God's activity in the world, then it seems that we are also to reflect grace. A couple of years ago, I was confronted with a question regarding grace. I was called up for jury duty, and as the lawyers were attempting to select members to serve, they peppered us with all kinds of questions. The young man being tried was accused of injuring two individuals by stabbing them. We were asked whether we would be willing to sentence this young man with the maximum sentence, which was 30 years to life in prison. Of course, we had not heard any evidence yet. We were just being selected for the jury, but as I looked at the young man at the defense table, I had a hard time imagining that I would be willing to put him away for the remainder of his life. I knew that, if found guilty, he would need to be punished for his crime, but I also believe in grace. I spoke up and mentioned that I believe in grace and the hope of transformation. We live with justice and grace in tension: the optimistic presence of the Spirit would desire an opportunity for this young man to be redeemed, both personally and for society as a whole, while also needing to accept punishment. This is not some kind of cheap grace but one that creates the space for the genuine and redemptive grace of God in the face of repentance. I was not accepted to serve on the jury, and I have no idea whether my response influenced that decision or not, but the call to be participants in the journey of grace is something that should touch every part of our lives.

Jesus came in the flesh, and every moment of His life was the preparation of the journey of grace, creating the pathway so that all can become holy, just as He is holy. This coming year, we will have more opportunities to consider this journey of grace, and specifically the place of prevenient grace, both in our lives and in the lives of others.

In 2020, we were forced outside the walls of our church buildings, and God used this to help the church become a vehicle to bring prevenient grace into communities, airways, and even social media. God's grace is revealed when we practice the incarnational presence of Jesus among

³ Geordan Hammond, *Holiness Today*, September 2020, 11.

those who are poor and needy. Prevenient grace circulates as Christian sisters and brothers stand for justice in the world and work toward reconciliation among all of God's children.

Throughout history, the Christian community has participated in prevenient grace by discipling and raising up a new generation of believers. This did not happen by chance but by the intentional discipline of those who had come to know Christ and recognized their responsibility to pass on the faith to those who would come after them. The home was often at the heart of discipleship and the center of prevenient grace. John Wesley's own mother, Suzanna, was an example of a woman who devoted a set time every week to disciple her children. Later in life, John Wesley would adopt Thursday evening for his class meetings because this was his allotted weekly time with his mother.

In the Church of the Nazarene, we celebrate two sacraments, Christian baptism and Holy Communion. More specifically, we believe that these sacraments are opportunities to experience a means of grace. If this is true, then we may need to reconsider the role that the sacraments play in the life of the local church and the associated teaching as a part of the discipleship journey.

The disciplines of prayer and fasting are also significant when it comes to prevenient grace. It is through these disciplines that followers of Christ are able to participate in fellowship with God, learn to discern God's leading, and intercede for others. When I was a child, prayer and fasting was a regular practice of NWMS—the Nazarene World Mission Society. My mother was an active participant and fasted every Thursday as she prayed for needs around the world. We need to rekindle these practices and make them a regular part of the life of the Church of the Nazarene. If we are to be on this journey of grace, then we must slow down and learn to discern the voice of God through prayer and fasting.

In this report, we have celebrated the lives of those who died well in the Lord. The testimony of Christians who live and die well serve as instruments of prevenient grace. Many a child, grandchild, friend, or acquaintance has turned to Christ because of the long-term witness of a loved one who refused to succumb to the temptations of the world.

I mentioned earlier in this report that I lost my father this year. As I have reflected on the lives of my parents, I have discovered how they were channels of prevenient grace in my own life. They believed in the redemptive work of God that could make a difference in the lives of all of their children. As I was sorting through their things, I found several of my mother's prayer

journals. In one of these, she wrote about Jerry Jr., my oldest brother. My big brother Jerry was the prodigal in our family, and my parents and his siblings waited for him every day with outstretched arms, hoping he would come back home. Prayer was the preferred avenue of prevenient grace, and my parents recruited everyone they could find to join with them in praying for their son.

My brother became critically ill because of a terminal lung condition. Suffering in the ICU, he told his wife, “I think I’m the most prayed for man in the world. I need to give my life to Jesus.” Here is what my mother wrote about that day:

Jerry again went into critical lows and Dennis [my second oldest brother] truly thought he was dying. But Jerry was able to gasp out, “Dennis, three hours ago, I became a Christian.” Dennis could only sob in response – and sobbed and sobbed. How long, this brother had prayed for Jerry! How many times he was there for Jerry down through the tough years! He could count on Dennis! And God counted on him too, and we are not disappointed. Praise God for His faithfulness and mercy and love. And praise God for Dennis, a *true brother* and friend “faithful and full of grace.”

A true friend, brother or sister, mother or father, participates with God’s activity in this world as an instrument of grace.

This past year certainly has been a journey of grace. God’s grace has taken us through many a surprise circumstance. We do not know what 2021 holds for us, but we, as the Church of the Nazarene, intentionally and willingly, choose to participate in God’s grace as we walk this journey together.

Prayerfully and respectfully submitted,
The Board of General Superintendents

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