

CHURCH MEMBER'S HANDBOOK

**An easy-to-read guide
to the Manual of
the Church of the Nazarene**

NEVILLE BARTLE • SCOTT STARGEL

2023 EDITION

Church Member's Handbook

**AN EASY-TO-READ GUIDE
TO THE MANUAL
OF THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

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Neville Bartle • Scott Stargel

PS

Prairie Star Publications

Published by Prairie Star Publications (Brisbane)
Copyright © 2014, 2018, 2025
Neville Bartle and Scott Stargel

ISBN 979-8-3485-6553-4
rev 2025-03-20

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THE OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

The seal has three important parts. First, the Bible shows that everything we believe and do is based on the Word of God. Second, the dove with flames behind it stands for our Methodist, Wesleyan, and Holiness roots. Third, the slogan 'Holiness unto the Lord' from Zechariah 14:20 remind us that we want all Christians to dedicate themselves completely to God.

INTRODUCTION

This small book is a guide to help church members better understand the Church of the Nazarene. It will show what we Nazarenes believe, how we govern ourselves, and what our purpose is.

The church has an official book called *The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*, but we usually just call it ‘the Manual.’ It is a legal document, and it is very detailed. Many people find it challenging to read and understand, even some who speak English as their first language. So, we prepared this book as an easy-to-read summary of the main points of the Manual, focusing on the parts that relate to the local church and district activities.

While we were very careful in preparing this book, please remember that the Manual is the official source. Throughout the book, you will encounter a paragraph mark that looks like this: ¶. It is followed by numbers. These numbers refer to sections in the 2023 version of the Manual. Look there for additional information. You may view or download a copy of the official Manual at nazarene.org/manual.

May God bless you as you follow him!

— *Neville Bartle and Scott Stargel*



Why does the Church of the Nazarene exist?

The work of the Church of the Nazarene is to introduce all people to the transforming grace of God who forgives our sins and cleanses our hearts through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Our mission is 'to make Christlike disciples in the nations,' to bring believers into congregations (church membership), and to instruct them so that they may be involved in ministry.

Our goal is to see people living holy lives through the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.

CHAPTER ONE

The core values of the Church of the Nazarene

The core values represent our highest priorities and our most deeply held beliefs. They define who we are and what motivates us. We use three words to summarize these values: Christian, holiness, and mission.

Christian

We are a Christian people, united with all true believers in proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord. We believe that God loves us so much that he sent his only son, Jesus, to be our Saviour. We believe that because of the sacrificial death of Jesus, all people may receive forgiveness of sins and be restored to a right relationship with God.

Since we have been reconciled to God, we believe that we must also be reconciled to one another. We should love each other in the same way that God loved us; we should forgive each other because he forgave us.

We accept the Bible as the source of spiritual truth. We affirm the beliefs and historic creeds of the Christian faith. We treasure our place in what is called the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. By 'Wesleyan,' we connect ourselves to the teachings of John and Charles Wesley who sparked a world-wide spiritual awakening in the

18th century. By 'Holiness,' we connect ourselves to the spiritual revivals of the 19th and 20th centuries, which were spurred by leaders such as Phineas Bresee, Charles Finney, and Phoebe Palmer with their firmly held belief that God desires to sanctify believers, transforming them into more Christlike disciples.

Holiness

We are a holiness people. Both the Bible and the grace of God call us to worship and love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves.

We believe that, in response to our faith, the Holy Spirit begins to transform and empower us day by day to

*Holiness means
Christlikeness*

be a people of love, spiritual discipline, moral purity, compassion, and justice. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that restores us in the image of God and pro-

duces in us the character of Christ. Holiness in the life of believers is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.

Mission

We are a people with a mission to spread the Good News all over the world. Our mission statement is simple: *to make Christlike disciples in the nations.*

OUR CORE VALUES

Our mission begins as we gather together for worship and then moves outward into the world. It is expressed as we receive new believers into the fellowship of the church and as we start new worshipping congregations.

We share God's love for those who are lost and his compassion for the poor and broken by helping to meet the real needs of hurting people. We are committed to inviting people to faith, to caring for those in need, and to including in our fellowship all who will call upon the name of the Lord.

We are committed to train and to educate our people so that women and men will be equipped as Christian leaders to accomplish the service God calls us to.

Discussion questions

1. What does it mean to you to be a 'Christian.' Is that different from being a 'Christian people'?
2. How can we demonstrate holiness in our daily lives?
3. What can you do to 'make Christlike disciples in the nations'? What can the church do?

CHAPTER TWO

What we believe: The articles of faith

Often, people will ask us, ‘What do Nazarenes believe?’ There is no simple answer to that question, though we might say with Paul, ‘Jesus is Lord!’ While that is a powerful statement, it does not give us very much information.

In order to state precisely our beliefs, Nazarenes followed the tradition of thousands of years of Christian history by adopting an official creed. A creed is a list of statements that usually start with the phrase, ‘We believe.’ It summarizes the Church’s most important beliefs.

The following is an easy-to-read version of the articles of faith. The official statements are found at the beginning of our constitution in the Manual. They have evolved over time to more accurately reflect changes in language, as well as the Church’s understanding of the timeless truths found in the Bible. Each article has several scripture references at the end to show the Biblical basis for it.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

1

The Trinity

We believe in one God who is eternal and without limits. He is the creator and the ruler of the universe. God sustains all things. God is holy in his nature, attributes, and purpose. God is holy light and holy love. God is one being whose nature is triune. God is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: the Trinity.

(Genesis 1; Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 6:4–5; Isaiah 5:16; 6:1–7; 40:18–31; Matthew 3:16–17; 28:19–20; John 14:6–27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4–6; Ephesians 2:13–18; 1 John 1:5; 4:8)

2

Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, who has always been one with the Father. He became human by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. He is not a man who became a god, nor is he a god who simply appeared to be a man. Instead, he

A THREE-HEADED GOD?

The Trinity is a difficult concept to understand! No, we do not believe in a god with three heads, and we don't believe in three different gods. The Bible is clear that there is only one God. The Bible is also clear that the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit are all God while at the same time different persons. Some people say that the Christian God is a contradiction that cannot exist. We say it is a mystery that we do not yet fully understand.

IS JESUS A DEMI-GOD?

In some religions, a 'god' will produce a child with a human: a demi-god (like Hercules). We do not believe that. Instead, we believe Jesus, somehow, exists both as all God and all Human at the same time.

is fully God and fully human: two whole natures combined into one, the God-man.

We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins. He was resurrected from the dead with his perfect, human body. He ascended into heaven, where he now intercedes for us.

(Matthew 1:20–25; 16:15–16; Luke 1:26–35; John 1:1–18; Acts 2:22–36; Romans 8:3, 32–34; Galatians 4:4–5; Philippians 2:5–11; Colossians 1:12–22; 1 Timothy 6:14–16; Hebrews

1:1–5; 7:22–28; 9:24–28; 1 John 1:1–3; 4:2–3, 15)

3

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who continually works in the Church of Christ and through it. The Holy Spirit convinces the world of sin, and he gives new life to those who repent and believe. The Holy Spirit sanctifies

IS THE SPIRIT JUST A FORCE?

While the Holy Spirit does not have a body (like Jesus), he is not simply some kind of force; he is a person! He can be lied to; he can grieve; he can teach; and he can give gifts.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

believers. The Holy Spirit guides believers into all truth as revealed in Jesus Christ.

(John 7:39; 14:15–18, 26; 16:7–15; Acts 2:33; 15:8–9; Romans 8:1–27; Galatians 3:1–14; 4:6; Ephesians 3:14–21; 1 Thessalonians 4:7–8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 3:24; 4:13)

4

The Bible

We believe that the Bible is fully and divinely inspired. The entirety of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments reveals without error all that we need to know for our salvation. All articles of faith must be based on this understanding of the Bible.

(Luke 24:44–47; John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; 1 Peter 1:10–12; 2 Peter 1:20–21)

A MAGIC BOOK?

The bible is special, but it is not magic! God guided the authors of all sixty-six books as they wrote about God and God's plan for salvation.

5

Sin

We believe that sin came into the world when our first parents, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God. Their sin brought death into creation. We believe that there are two kinds of sin: original sin and personal sin.

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We believe that all people are born with a corrupted nature, called original sin or depravity. This nature separates us from original righteousness, which is the pure state of our first parents at the time that God created them. We are spiritually dead and live continually inclined to evil. We believe that original sin remains within the heart of the Christian until it is fully cleansed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Original sin is different from personal sin. Original sin is an inherited inclination that drives us to commit sinful acts. People are not judged guilty for original sin until they either neglect or reject God's remedy for it.

Personal sin, also called actual sin, is the act of intentionally breaking a known law of God by persons who are capable of understanding their actions. Such sins should not be confused with involuntary and inescapable limitations that are the leftover results of the Fall. Sins are not the same as mistakes, errors, faults, or other involuntary actions that do not conform to a standard of perfect conduct. However, these limitations are not the same as sins of the spirit. Sins of the spirit include attitudes and actions that are contrary to the Spirit of Christ. Personal sin is primarily and essentially the breaking of the law of love, which may be defined as unbelief in Jesus Christ.

(Original sin: Genesis 3; 6:5; Job 15:14; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:18-25; 5:12-14; 7:1-8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 1:7-8)

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Personal sin: Matthew 22:36–40 with 1 John 3:4; John 8:34–6; 16:8–9; Romans 3:23; 6:15–23; 8:18–24; 14:23; 1 John 1:9—2:4; 3:7–10)

6

The atonement

We believe that Jesus Christ suffered, bled, and died on the cross to bring God and human beings into a right relationship. These acts are called the atonement. It provides the remedy for all human sin, and it is the only basis of salvation. Jesus Christ died for all people. The grace of God provides salvation for children prior to the age of accountability and for those who are incapable of making decisions for themselves. All others must repent and believe to be saved.

(Isaiah 53:5–6, 11; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:46–48; John 1:29; 3:14–17; Acts 4:10–12; Romans 3:21–26; 4:17–25; 5:6–21; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14–21; Galatians 1:3–4; 3:13–14; Colossians 1:19–23; 1 Timothy 2:3–6; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 2:9; 9:11–14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:18–21; 2:19–25; 1 John 2:1–2)

7

Grace

We believe that the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, is free and given to all people. It empowers them to choose to turn from sin to righteousness, to believe on Jesus Christ for pardon, and to receive cleansing from sin. The grace of God empowers people to live in ways that are pleasing and acceptable to God.

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We believe that humanity was created in the image of God, which included the ability to choose between good and evil. This is known as moral responsibility. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve, all people are born with a corrupt nature. By their own natural strength, they cannot turn to faith and call upon God, and they cannot do good works to save themselves.

(Godlikeness and moral responsibility: Genesis 1:26–27; 2:16–17; Deuteronomy 28:1–2; 30:19; Joshua 24:15; Psalm 8:3–5; Isaiah 1:8–10; Jeremiah 31:29–30; Ezekiel 18:1–4; Micah 6:8; Romans 1:19–20; 2:1–16; 14:7–12; Galatians 6:7–8.

Natural inability: Job 14:4; 15:14; Psalms 14:1–4; 51:5; John 3:6a; Romans 3:10–12; 5:12–14, 20a; 7:14–25.

Free grace and works of faith: Ezekiel 18:25–26; John 1:12–13; 3:6b; Acts 5:31; Romans 5:6–8, 18; 6:15–16, 23; 10:6–8; 11:22; 1 Corinthians 2:9–14; 10:1–12; 2 Corinthians 5:18–19; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 2:8–10; Philippians 2:12–13; Colossians 1:21–23; 2 Timothy 4:10a; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 2:1–3; 3:12–15; 6:4–6; 10:26–31; James 2:18–22; 2 Peter 1:10–11; 2:20–22)

8

Repentance

We believe that the Holy Spirit graciously gives a penitent heart and the hope of mercy to all who will repent. Thus, those who repent are able to believe and receive pardon and spiritual life. Salvation requires repentance, which is a sincere and thorough change of mind about sin. Repentance involves a sense of personal guilt and voluntarily turning away from sin. It is required because

WHAT WE BELIEVE

we all, through our actions or our intentions, became sinners against God.

We believe that it is possible for someone to return to sin and reject the faith. Those who return to sin will be hopelessly and eternally lost unless they repent of their sins. However, we believe that those who are born again need not return to sin. Instead, they may continue to live, without interruption, in fellowship with God because of the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in them. The Holy Spirit witnesses to our spirits that we are children of God.

(2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalms 32:5-6; 51:1-17; Isaiah 55:6-7; Jeremiah 3:12-14; Ezekiel 18:30-32; 33:14-16; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 3:1-14; 13:1-5; 18:9-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30-31; 26:16-18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9)

9

Salvation

At the moment a person repents and has faith in Christ, there things happen at the same time: justification, regeneration, and adoption. The Holy Spirit witnesses to us that God has accomplished these acts of grace.

Justification. We believe that all who believe in Jesus Christ and receive him as Lord and Savior are justified. This means that God fully and freely pardons their guilt

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and releases them from the penalty of their sins. He accepts them as righteous.

Regeneration. We believe that God freely regenerates all those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He provides them with a new spiritual life and a new moral nature, which is capable of faith, love, and obedience to God. This is called the new birth.

Adoption. We believe that God, who freely justifies and regenerates new believers, adopts them as children into the family of God.

(Isaiah 6:7; Luke 18:14; John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; 5:24; Acts 13:39; Romans 1:17; 3:21-26, 28; 4:5-9, 17-25; 5:1, 16-19; 6:4; 7:6; 8:1, 15-17;

ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAVED?

God created us in his image. We believe that gives humans the ability to make their own choices. This is called free will. Sadly, Because of sin, we are powerless to find the way back to God on our own.

The good news is that Jesus died for all people. That is why the Spirit works inside everyone to give them the power to make a decision about Jesus. God draws people to him, and anyone who uses their free will and accepts this gift is saved!

Nothing has the power to steal our salvation: no person, no demon, no one. We are safe in God's hand. And yet, we still have free will after we are saved. Sadly, some choose to turn away from faith in Christ and are once again lost.

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1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Galatians 2:16–21; 3:1–14, 26; 4:4–7; Ephesians 1:6–7; 2:1, 4–5; Philippians 3:3–9; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:4–7; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 1:9; 3:1–2, 9; 4:7; 5:1, 9–13, 18)

10

Christian holiness and entire sanctification

Sanctification. We believe that sanctification is the work of God that transforms believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ. God's grace accomplishes this work through the Holy Spirit. Sanctification starts with regeneration, which happens at the same time as justification. It is also called initial sanctification. It continues through entire sanctification and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit as he perfects believers, transforming them into Christlikeness. It results in glorification, at which time they are fully conformed to the image of the Son.

Entire sanctification. We believe that after regeneration there is an additional work of God by which believers are freed from original sin, which is also called depravity. Believers enter into a state of entire devotion to God and holy obedience that is perfected love.

Entire sanctification is the result of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which is also called the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It includes the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

He empowers the believer to live for Jesus Christ and to serve him.

Entire sanctification is possible because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. It happens instantaneously by grace through faith. It is preceded by the total commitment of a believer to God, which is called entire consecration. The Holy Spirit witnesses to us that God has accomplished this.

A PERFECT CHRISTIAN?

'Perfection' is a difficult word because it can mean that something is faultless, errorless, absolutely without flaws. However, the Bible does not use the word like that. Instead, it talks about being 'complete' and 'whole' and 'just as God intended.'

This experience is known by various terms that represent its different phases: 'Christian perfection,' 'perfect love,' 'heart purity,' 'the baptism with the Holy Spirit,' 'the infilling of the Holy Spirit,' 'the fullness of the blessing,' and 'Christian holiness.'

We believe there is a clear distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. A pure heart happens

in an instant as a result of entire sanctification. A mature character happens over time through the process of growing in grace.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe that the person who is entirely sanctified has a godly desire to grow in grace as a Christlike disciple. This growth is not automatic.

It must be consciously nurtured through spiritual development and improvement in order to develop a Christlike character and personality. Those who do not intentionally nurture their spiritual growth will damage their witness. They may frustrate God's grace and eventually lose it.

By participating in the means of grace, believers grow in grace and in wholehearted love of God and neighbor. These means of grace include especially fellowship, the spiritual disciplines, and the sacraments of the Church.

(Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:25–27; Malachi 3:2–3; Matthew 3:11–12; Luke 3:16–17; John 7:37–39; 14:15–23; 17:6–20; Acts 1:5; 2:1–4; 15:8–9; Romans 6:11–13, 19; 8:1–4, 8–14; 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Galatians 2:20; 5:16–25; Ephesians 3:14–21; 5:17–18, 25–27; Philippians 3:10–15; Colossians 3:1–17; 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24; Hebrews 4:9–11; 10:10–17; 12:1–2; 13:12; 1 John 1:7, 9)

*The Holy Spirit
empowers the believer
to live for Jesus Christ
and serve him.*

11

The Church

We believe in the Church, which is the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord. It is the people of God's covenant who are made new in Christ. The Church is the

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body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

God calls the Church to be a visible expression of the unity and the fellowship of the Spirit. The Church demonstrates this unity as believers obey Christ and live holy lives. Believers are mutually accountable to one another. This unity is visible in worship through the preaching of the Word, by participating in the sacraments, and by ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.

The mission of the Church is to share the work of Christ as he redeems and reconciles the world in the power of the Spirit. The Church fulfills its mission by making disciples. We do this through evangelizing, educating, showing compassion, working for justice, and proclaiming the kingdom of God.

The Church exists both as local congregations and as a universal community. The Church expresses its life and worship in different ways in different cultures. The Church recognizes that God calls some people to various ministries and places them in positions to fulfil their calling. The Church lives under God's rule as it waits for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Exodus 19:3; Jeremiah 31:33; Matthew 8:11; 10:7; 16:13–19, 24; 18:15–20; 28:19–20; John 17:14–26; 20:21–23; Acts 1:7–8; 2:32–47; 6:1–2; 13:1; 14:23; Romans 2:28–29; 4:16; 10:9–15; 11:13–32; 12:1–8; 15:1–3; 1 Corinthians 3:5–9; 7:17; 11:1, 17–33; 12:3, 12–31; 14:26–40; 2 Corinthians 5:11–6:1; Galatians 5:6, 13–14; 6:1–5, 15; Ephesians 4:1–17; 5:25–27; Philippians 2:1–16; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–12; 1 Timothy

WHAT WE BELIEVE

4:13; Hebrews 10:19–25; 1 Peter 1:1–2, 13; 2:4–12, 21; 4:1–2, 10–11;
1 John 4:17; Jude 24; Revelation 5:9–10)

12

Baptism

We believe that Christian baptism is a sacrament commanded by our Lord. It signifies that a person has accepted the benefits of the atonement and has become a part of the body of Christ. It is a means of grace that proclaims the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Baptism demonstrates a believer's desire to follow Jesus Christ in obedience, holiness, and righteousness.

Young children and the morally innocent are participants in the new covenant. Therefore, they may be baptized at the request of their parents or guardians. The church pledges to provide Christian training. A person may be baptized by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

ALL WET?

Throughout Christian history, the church has used different methods to baptise believers. Today, a lot of people believe that a person should go completely underwater to be properly baptised. However, Nazarenes believe this special event can be done by pouring water over someone or even sprinkling water on them. The water is the important symbol since it reminds of being washed clean.

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(Matthew 3:1-7; 28:16-20; Acts 2:37-41; 8:35-39; 10:44-48; 16:29-34; 19:1-6; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-28; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:18-22)

13

The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament that Jesus Christ established. It proclaims his life, suffering, sacrificial death, resurrection, and the hope of his coming again. It is a means of grace in which Christ is present by the Spirit. All are invited to participate by faith in Christ and to be renewed in life, in salvation, and in unity as the Church. All should come respectfully, appreciating its significance. By participating in this sacrament, we testify to the Lord's death until he comes again. Those who have faith in Christ and who love the people of God are invited to participate as often as possible.

(Exodus 12:1-14; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; John 6:28-58; 1 Corinthians 10:14-21; 11:23-32)

14

Divine healing

We believe in the biblical doctrine of divine healing. We encourage our people to pray in faith for the healing of the sick. We also believe that God heals through the means of medical science.

(2 Kings 5:1-19; Psalm 103:1-5; Matthew 4:23-24; 9:18-35; John 4:46-54; Acts 5:12-16; 9:32-42; 14:8-15; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians

WHAT WE BELIEVE

12:7–10; James 5:13–16)

15

The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed as Lord of all at the end of time. He will come again in glory and power. His second coming will establish fully the kingdom of God that he proclaimed and began during his life and ministry. As the Trinity first created heaven and earth, God will renew them in the new creation. There, he will dwell eternally with his redeemed people.

We who are alive when he comes will not precede those that already died in Christ Jesus. Instead, if we are living in him, we will be gathered together in the air with those who have died. Together, we will forever be with the Lord. On that day, God, who in the cross triumphed over all evil powers, will complete his loving purposes for creation. There will be no more suffering, injustice, or death, and God will wipe away every tear.

(Deuteronomy 10:17; Isaiah 11:1–9; 65:17–25; 66:22–23; Matthew 6:9–13, 24; 25:31–46; 28:18; Luke 4:18–21; John 14:1–3; Acts 1:9–11; 3:21; Romans 8:18–22; 1 Corinthians 13:12–13; 15:24–25, 28; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:6; 2:5–11; 3:20–21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 9:26–28; 2 Peter 3:3–15; Revelation 1:7–8; 12:10–12; 21:1–8; 22:7–20)

Resurrection, judgment, and destiny

We believe in the resurrection of the dead. That is to say, the bodies of both the just and the unjust will be raised to life and united with their spirits. “Those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.”

We believe in a future judgment in which every person will appear before God to be judged according to his or her deeds in this life.

We believe that those who are saved by faith in Jesus Christ and who obediently follow him are assured of a glorious and everlasting life. Those who refuse to repent will suffer eternally in hell.

(Genesis 18:25; 1 Samuel 2:10; Psalm 50:6; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31; 20:27-38; John 3:16-18; 5:25-29; 11:21-27; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 2:1-16; 14:7-12; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15; 22:1-15)

DO YOU WANT TO MEMORIZE ALL 16 ARTICLES OF FAITH?

When someone asks, ‘What do Nazarenes believe’, it might be helpful to talk about the articles of faith.

To help you understand and memorize them, visit www.StudyMaps.org for a visual guide to the articles of faith!

CHAPTER THREE

Membership in the Church of the Nazarene

What does the word ‘church’ mean?

The Bible says that there is a Book of Life where the names of all believers are written down (Revelation 20:12). Nazarenes do not believe that we are the only ones whose names are written in that book. Instead, we believe that all believers, including those who have already died, are part of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. We state this clearly in our eleventh article of faith [¶11].

However, a word often has more than one meaning, and this is true of the word ‘church.’ Believers gather together in different places all over the world to worship, fellowship, and minister to those in their community. Sometimes these are called congregations or assemblies, but we usually call them ‘local churches.’ Sometimes they meet in a building that is also called ‘a church.’ Other churches may meet under a shady tree or in a rented storefront. No matter where the local church gathers, God is there, present and active [¶18].

Yet another use of the word ‘church’ is when we talk about a denomination. So, while there are individual Churches of the Nazarene all over the world, there is also

a global organisation called the Church of the Nazarene. It is a collection of all those people who voluntarily associate themselves with it and call themselves Nazarenes.

Becoming a member of the Church of the Nazarene

Not everyone who attends our worship services or supports our ministries is a member of the Church of the Nazarene. That is not a problem, since joining the church is voluntary. A church member makes a public commitment to be actively involved and to support the local church. [¶10–111.5]

It is especially important that a person understands what it means to be a Nazarene before joining the church. Typically, the pastor will arrange for those who want to become members to attend classes to learn about the Church of the Nazarene: its doctrines, history, rules, government, policies, mission, core values, and priorities. Perhaps, you are reading this small book because you want to become a member.

For those who want to join the church, there are four requirements.

A church member must...

... ***be a Christian.*** People who want to become members must be saved —born again. When they join the

MEMBERSHIP

church, the pastor will ask them to affirm that they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

... ***agree with the doctrines of the church.*** *In front of the congregation, the pastor will ask those who want to join the Church to affirm the statement of belief of the Church of the Nazarene.*

... ***accept the government of the church.*** *The requirements are found in the government sections of the Manual.*

... ***support the church.*** *They agree to attend faithfully the services, to participate in its programmes, and to support it financially.*

The statement of belief

While the articles of faith of the Church of the Nazarene give specific details about all our important doctrines, we realise that not everyone will understand those statements. Therefore, the Manual contains a shorter declaration called the ‘statement of belief’ [¶20]. The pastor will ask each person who wants to become a member to affirm this statement before joining the Church of the Nazarene.

- We believe in one God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

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- We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures—fully inspired by God—contain all truth necessary to faith and Christian living.
- We believe that human beings are born with a fallen nature and are, therefore, continually inclined to evil.
- We believe that those who do not repent before they die are hopelessly and eternally lost.
- We believe that the atonement through Jesus Christ is for the whole human race. Whoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified, regenerated, and saved from the domination of sin.
- We believe that Christians should be entirely sanctified through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This experience comes after regeneration.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit witnesses to the new birth and to the entire sanctification of believers.

WHAT IF I DO NOT BELIEVE ALL OF THIS?

If you do not understand any part of the statement of belief, or if you do not agree with some of it, talk to the pastor. There is no hurry to become a member, and we do not want anyone to feel forced to join.

However, we encourage people to continue to worship and to serve in a Nazarene church, if they are regularly attending, even though they may not become members.

MEMBERSHIP

- We believe that our Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place.

The Covenant of Christian Character

Most organisations have rules that their members follow. This is true of the Church of the Nazarene as well. We have two covenants, which are written promises that indicate how we expect our members to live.

People who have accepted Jesus as their saviour and who desire to join the Church of the Nazarene should live godly lives. We have the privilege and the duty to be like Christ. The Word of God instructs us on how we should live, and 'The Covenant of Christian Character' summarizes these instructions [¶21].

Church members should...

... love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength, and their neighbour as themselves. (Exodus 20:3-6; Leviticus 19:17-18; Deuteronomy 5:7-10; 6:4-5; Mark 12:28-31; Romans 13:8-10)

... share the gospel with those who are not saved, invite them to church, and seek to lead them to Christ. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:14-16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

... be courteous to all people. (Ephesians 4:32; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 John 3:18)

... be helpful, kind, patient, and forgiving to other Christians. (Romans 12:13; Galatians 6:2, 10; Colossians 3:12-14)

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... seek to do good to all who are hungry, sick, imprisoned, and in need. (Matthew 25:35-36; 2 Corinthians 9:8-10; Galatians 2:10; James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17-18)

... give tithes and offerings to support the work of the church. (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 9:14; 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; Philippians 4:15-19)

... attend faithfully church worship services, take communion, and have private and family devotions. (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30; Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-16; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Matthew 6:6)

Church members should avoid...

... to use the name of God in a disrespectful way. (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; James 5:12)

... doing unnecessary work on Sunday, 'the Lord's Day'. (Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13-14; Mark 2:27-28; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10)

... all forms of sexual immorality. (Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)

... habits or practices that are destructive to us physically or mentally. We should remember that we are the temples of the Holy Spirit. (Proverbs 20:1; 23:1-3; 1 Corinthians 6:17-20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:18)

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... quarrelling, gossiping, and spreading stories that hurt the good names of others. (2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:15; Ephesians 4:30-32; James 3:5-18; 1 Peter 3:9-10)

... dishonesty, cheating in business, and telling lies.
(Leviticus 19:10-11; Romans 12:17; 1 Corinthians 6:7-10)

... being proud in dress and behaviour. Members should dress modestly so as to reflect a holy life. (Proverbs 29:23; 1 Timothy 2:8-10; James 4:6; 1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 John 2:15-17)

... music, literature, and entertainments that dishonour God. (1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; James 4:4)

We should always...

... be in wholehearted fellowship with the church.

... respect the church leadership.

... remain committed to the Church's doctrines and rules.

... be actively involved in outreach and ministry.

(Ephesians 2:18-22; 4:1-3, 11-16; Philippians 2:1-8; 1 Peter 2:9-10)

Discussion questions

1. After reading about the 'Covenant of Christian Character', how would you describe a Nazarene way of life?

2. Why is it important to understand the requirements and commitments involved in church membership?

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3. Which of the requirements do you think is the most difficult to follow? Which ones are easiest for you?

**ARE YOU READY TO BECOME A MEMBER
OF THE CHURCH?**

If you meet all four of the requirements to become a member, you should talk to the pastor about membership. The pastor will interview you and make a recommendation to a special committee of the church. If the committee approves, the pastor will welcome you as a new member at a public ceremony during a church service.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Covenant of Christian conduct

In Chapter Three, we reviewed the requirements to become a member in the Church of the Nazarene that are found in our denomination's constitution. The constitution contains our first covenant, 'The Covenant of Christian Character'. It describes a believer who strives to be a Christlike disciple. The second covenant, called 'The Covenant of Christian Conduct,' speaks more directly to those things that we do or do not do and how they influence our walk with God. Below is a shortened version of that covenant [¶28-35].

The Christian life

Believers have a new life in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-19). We need this new life, because the Bible shows how powerful and destructive sin is. In the Bible, we read about how God created all things. He called his creation 'good.' However, we then read in the Bible how sin destroyed our relationship with God. The good news is that God did not abandon the world he created. He has a plan to restore everything that sin damaged. The most important part of that plan was Jesus.

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Because of the work of God, we are able to become disciples of Jesus: people who follow him and want to be like him. In life, we make commitments and choices based on the work God is doing in us. We will discuss the types of things we should or should not do. First, though, we should look at two principles that guide us to make good decisions.

Principle 1: God's people are committed to the truth of the Bible: the Old and New Testaments. The basis of our rules of life are the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). Today, it is very important that every culture seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit about how to live. We also listen to the wisdom of the Christian tradition to decide how to live as Christlike disciples (See John 14:26 and 16:13).

Principle 2: God wants his people to be healthy and whole. The Christian life means that we do some things and do not do other things. Sometimes, the decisions are difficult, and we must make sacrifices. But the things we do and do not do shape our lives. They help us to be more Christlike.

(Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11, Leviticus 25:1-5, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Choosing what is right

Based on the two principles, as Nazarenes, **we will do certain things.**

COVENANT OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

- **We will be disciples**, and we will be part of a local church. (§28.3)
- **We will show God's grace and love to the whole world.** Every person is important to God. We will work to create a more just society and world, especially for the poor, the oppressed, and those who cannot speak for themselves. (§28.4)
- **We will use our time wisely.** All our time belongs to God—leisure, rest, work, worship—all of it. The way we use our time impacts others. So, together we commit to use our time wisely. (§28.5)
- **We will continually learn.** Everyone should be learning—children, youth, and adults. Because all truth is God's truth, we want Christians to work in public schools and other jobs and influence them for God. And, we should teach Christian truths at home. (§28.6)
- **We will work honestly**, as if we are working for God. Everything we do should reflect Christlikeness to the world. All our work, paid or unpaid, should be done generously, ethically, and justly. (§ 28.7)
- **We will be careful in how we use technology.** Churches should use technology. However, we should first take care of our relationships with other people. We should avoid isolating ourselves or

only using virtual meetings, unless for medical reasons. (§28.8)

- **We will care for creation.** God said that his creation was good, and he gave humans responsibility to take care of it. We should use our resources wisely for God's greater purposes: such as avoiding pollution, not wasting resources, or not consuming too much. (§ 28.9)
- **We will be peacemakers.** Jesus said that peacemakers are blessed. He commanded us to love our enemies. So, we will work for peace: in our families, among friends, at the workplace, in our churches, in our societies, nations, people groups, and tribes. (§28.10)
- **We will make wise choices** in how we use our time, money, and body.

To summarize, **we will be living examples of the fruit of the Spirit.**

Refusing what is wrong

The list above shows us some things we should do. As we study the Bible, our faith grow deeper spiritually, and we become wiser. This helps us recognize practices that do not lead to healthy and Christlike living. When we break God's law or refuse to do what God desires, it is called 'sinning.'

COVENANT OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

The church does not create a list of every sin. Instead, we learn together to be wise. John Wesley's mother taught him a way to decide if something is good or bad, 'Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of your body over mind, that thing for you is sin.'

The Holy Spirit transforms us and gives us power over sin so that we are able not to sin. We

understand that sin takes new forms in each generation of people. Often, these new and destructive ways can be avoided by following the guidelines above, doing the right things. Sometimes, though, we need to know what not to do.

Therefore, as Nazarenes, **we should not do certain things.**

- **We avoid entertainment and activities that waste money, ignore God, or glorify evil.** This is especially

WHERE ARE ALL THE SPECIAL RULES?

The two covenants of the Church of the Nazarene include some rules like 'do not abuse drugs' and 'do not drink alcohol.' However, every culture is different, so we depend on the shared wisdom of the leaders and people of the local church to help guide new believers.

true for what we choose to watch on screens such as pornography, the occult, and the violent.

- **We avoid anything that encourages self-centredness, violence, unwholesome sex, or treats others as objects rather than persons created in the image of God.**
- **We stand against anything that mocks God.**
- **We avoid all forms of dancing that hinder our spiritual growth.**
- **We avoid unnecessary work on Sunday.**

(¶29.1)

- **We will identify, prevent, and resist unhealthy habits or addictions.** We do not make a list of every harmful habit, because they may be different from country to country. Unhealthy habits may include some that are legal and may not seem very harmful at first, such as food, sport, fitness, drugs, cosmetic surgery, the internet, or shopping.

(¶29.2. See Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

- **We will not drink alcohol.** Alcohol abuse is very common and destructive all over the world. We ask our people to refrain from alcohol as a way to show love and solidarity with those who suffer from its

*The things
we do or
do not do
often have
more effect
on other
people than
the words
we say.*

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abuse. This includes individuals, families, and communities who are hurt by alcohol abuse. We know that other Christian traditions may have different rules about alcohol. (§29.3)

- **We will not use tobacco or abuse drugs.** We should not use anything that harms our bodies or affects our thinking or feelings. This is true whether the substance is legal or not. We understand that some drugs are necessary for good health. People should only use them if they are under the care of a medical professional. [§29.4]
- **We will not gamble.** This includes lotteries and ‘get-rich’ schemes, even if they are legal.
- **We will reject all attitudes and actions that devalue people.** All humans are created in the image of God, and Christ died for everyone. Therefore, every person we meet deserves our respect and love. We are against racism. We oppose any favouritism based on ethnicity, tribalism, gender, religious intolerance, social class discrimination, exclusive nationalism, and any other kind of bias. We also reject ‘prosperity gospel’ messages that say material rewards are a sign of God’s favour, as this often implies that poverty or illness is due to lack of faith or giving.

[§29.6]

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(Philippians 4:8-9; Colossians 3:23; Romans 14:7-13; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Ephesians 5:1-18; Philippians 4:8-9; 1 Peter 1:13-17; 2 Peter 1:3-11)

Most of the time, sinful acts are a distortion of something good and wholesome. While making a list of sins to avoid, we should remember that often a 'bad' thing can be replaced with a 'good thing.' For instance 'do not work on Sunday' could be replaced with 'go to worship on Sunday.' And 'avoid entertainments that waste money' could be replaced with 'encourage those who create and participate in positive entertainments, arts, and sports.'

Marriage and divorce

There are many forces working in society to weaken and destroy marriage and the Christian family. It is important that pastors preach clearly the biblical plan that marriage should be permanent. Churches need to develop programmes that will strengthen and help Christian families.

God designed marriage, and it is the mutual union of one man and one woman for fellowship, helpfulness, and bearing children. People should not enter into marriage hastily but after prayer for God's guidance. Marriage is binding as long as both are

CAN A DIVORCED PERSON BECOME A MEMBER?

Yes. While divorce is a serious problem, it does not mean that a divorced person is excluded from being a Christian or becoming a member.

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alive. Nazarene ministers will only conduct weddings for those who have a biblical basis for marriage.

(Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:21-24; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; Ephesians 5:21-6:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4)

We recognize that some people are forced to divorce against their will, and some people get divorced for legal or physical protection.

Members who are in unhappy marriages should try to find ways to correct the problems. They should do this in harmony with their vows and the clear teachings of Scripture. They should also seek to protect their family. Couples with serious marriage problems should seek counsel from their pastor and other spiritual leaders.

Because of ignorance, sin, and human weakness many people do not follow God's plan. We believe God can help these people just as Jesus helped the woman of Samaria. Where people have divorced and remarried, they may be accepted as Church members if they are committed to the sanctity of marriage. [¶31]

(Genesis 2:21-24; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 7:36-50; 16:18; John 7:53-8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:10-16; Ephesians 5:25-33)

Sex

We believe that God created this world and all that lives on it. We believe that everything God created was very good, and this includes sex. God created our bodies (including our genitals and hormones) and the way male

and female come together in sexual union. This is God's gift to us and should be used in a way that God approves. Sex should be seen as God's beautiful gift. It is not dirty or cheap.

In marriage a man and a woman covenant to give themselves unconditionally to the other. Two become one. This commitment binds them together mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Therefore, we believe sex outside of marriage is a sin.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Genesis 1:27; 19:1-25; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:8-10)

[¶31]

The sacredness of human life

The Church of the Nazarene believes that life, even that of an unborn child, is sacred and is given to us by God. We are opposed to abortion. We realise that there are rare cases where the life of the mother, the unborn child, or both are in danger. In such situations, termination of the pregnancy should only be done after sound medical advice and Christian counselling.

Since we are opposed to abortion, we must also be committed to programmes that help mothers and children. Where there is an unwanted pregnancy, the church must provide loving support, prayer, and counsel. This may include homes for expectant mothers or the creation of Christian adoption services.

COVENANT OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Often people seek abortion because they did not follow Christian standards of sexual responsibility. The church needs to provide clear teaching on human sexuality from a Christian perspective.

(Exodus 20:13; 21:12-16; Job 31:15; Psalms 22:9; 139:3-16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; 49:5; Luke 1:23-25, 36-45; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:16; 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)

[¶30]

Christian stewardship

The Scriptures teach that God is the owner of everything. We humans are stewards, or caretakers, of God's creation. We should care for and use wisely the resources that we have. This includes both our lives and the things we possess. One day we must give an account of our stewardship to God. [¶32]

Tithing. God established a system of giving called 'tithing,' which means giving one-tenth of our income back to him. This demonstrates both God's ownership and our stewardship. We sometimes call it 'storehouse tithing.' This phrase is from Malachi 3:10. It means that church members should give their tithe to one place, the local church. We also give other offerings, in addition

A CHURCH TAX?

Tithing is both a spiritual and financial act, but it is not like taxes or loans. This is why we say 'give tithes' rather than 'pay tithes.'

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to the tithe, to support the whole church at local, district, regional, and general levels. [¶32.1]

Local church giving. Just as church members give money to the local church, the local church also supports other ministries. We urge our local churches to pay their district, regional, and general obligations on a monthly basis. [¶32.1]

Support of the ministers. ‘The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel’ (1 Corinthians 9:14). Church members give their tithe regularly. From those funds, the church should support its ministers—those whom God has called and who give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry. Church boards should pay their pastor a consistent salary every week. [¶32.3]

Life gifts and giving after we die. Christians should be faithful in giving their tithes and offerings while they are alive. They should also think of what they will do with the money and possessions that remain when they die. Christians should prayerfully make a legal will and consider giving towards the ongoing work of the church. [¶32.4]

(Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 6:24-34; 25:31-46; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 12:13-24; 19:11-27; John 15:1-17; Romans 12:1-13; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Hebrews 7:8; James 1:27; 1 John 3:16-18)

COVENANT OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Leaders

In the Church of the Nazarene, the pastor and the local leaders share the work of ministry. Church leaders are elected to various positions in the church. Typically, the church members elect them. So, members should be careful and elect only those members who profess the experience of entire sanctification and who demonstrate a holy life through the grace of God. Leaders should be in harmony with the doctrines, policy, and practices of the Church of the Nazarene. They should be active in the church. This includes supporting the church faithfully in attendance and with tithes and offerings. (§33)

Discussion questions

1. Discuss the advice John Wesley's mother gave to him: "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of your body over mind, that thing for you is sin."
2. What are some ways believers support one another in avoiding practices that hinder spiritual growth?
3. Does the pastor work another job in order to support their family? How might the church be different if our leaders could give more of their time to ministry?

CHAPTER FIVE

Church organisation

There are many different churches and denominations in the world. However, almost all are organised according to one of three ways:

1. Some churches give their ministers most of the authority.
2. Some churches give the congregation most of the authority.
3. Some churches share the authority between ministers and the congregation.

Phineas Bresee was a minister in the Methodist Church in the western part of the United States. The Methodists had leaders called bishops. Bishops had most of the authority over pastors and churches. Later in his life, Bresee left the Methodists and started many new churches. He felt they needed strong leaders who could encourage and supervise pastors, like bishops. However, he chose to call them superintendents.

On the eastern side of the United States, there were some churches that, like Bresee, believed that holy living was a biblical truth that the church should preach. However, this group felt that bishops sometimes

CHURCH ORGANISATION

interfered too much in the affairs of the local church. So, they gave each congregation most of the authority.

When these two groups decided to come together to form the Church of the Nazarene, they worked hard to find a way to combine these different ideas about church leadership. They agreed that they needed superintendents to counsel and help guide the churches. They also agreed that local churches should have the authority to choose their own pastor and look after their own affairs.

The Church of the Nazarene chose a representative form of government. This means that leaders at all levels of church government are elected. The pastor and the church board share the responsibility of leading and managing the work of the church. However, we believe that churches should not be independent of each other. They should work together. Therefore, the Church of the Nazarene has leaders, still called superintendents, who assist the local church to fulfill its mission and objectives. A superintendent is like a team leader or coach who encourages and supports all the pastors in his or her area of responsibility, called a district.

The authority of the superintendents is limited, though, and they should not interfere with the independent action of an healthy church. Such churches select their own pastor, manage their own finances, and handle

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all the other matters related to their local life and work.
[¶22-22.3]

There are three levels of church government in the Church of the Nazarene.

1. The local church
2. The district assembly
3. The General Assembly

At each level, we see collaboration between individual leaders and boards. At the local church, the pastor and the church board work together. Local churches are grouped together into districts, which are led by a district superintendent who works with an advisory board. Together they help guide the churches on the district. The districts are led by six general superintendents who work with the General Board to lead and direct the global church.

To help with administration, the General Board divides the world into six regions. Each region has a regional director (not superintendent) who helps the general superintendents do their work.

Discussion questions

1. What are the three main ways churches organise their authority, and how does the Church of the Nazarene blend these approaches?

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2. Why is the representative form of government important in the Church of the Nazarene, and how does it promote collaboration at different levels?

3. How important are superintendents in the life of the local church?

CHAPTER SIX

The local church

The most important organisation in the Church of the Nazarene is the local church.

A dynamic local church is easy to identify. The community knows it as a place where...

... people come together to worship, to learn from God's word, and to hear good preaching.

... people become Christians and grow spiritually.

... people become active church members and share in the church's ministry to others.

A local church is not a building. Instead, it is a group of Christians who become members and agree to support the ministry of the church in their community. It is part of a global denomination called the Church of the Nazarene.

In chapter four, we discussed how a person joins the Church of the Nazarene as a member. Being a member has many privileges, including the important responsibility of participating in official church meetings.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

The annual church meeting

A church meeting is a gathering where the members meet together to discuss issues and to make decisions concerning the life, growth, and organisation of the local church. Churches have one official church meeting each year, but from time to time, they may call special meetings if an important issue arises. [¶115-115.15]

Here are some important details about the meeting.

- The annual church meeting has two main functions: to hear reports and to conduct elections.
- The pastor is the chair of the meeting — the president.
- The secretary of the church board is the secretary of the church meeting.
- The annual church meeting must take place less than three months before the district assembly (see the next chapter for more about district assemblies).
- A member must be at least 15 years old to vote in elections at the meeting.

CAN THE PASTOR VOTE AT A CHURCH MEETING?

The pastor is a member of the church and can vote. However, when leading a big meeting, they need to be fair.

This means they typically do not vote unless it is by secret ballot or if their vote decides the result.

The annual reports

Each year, everyone hears from the leaders of the different ministries of the church. This is important, so that all the members know what is happening in the church. The pastor will help the leaders prepare. Here is a list of the reports.

- The pastor [¶125.7]
- The secretary [¶145.2]
- The treasurer [¶146.5]
- The Nazarene Discipleship (NDI) president [¶156.6]
- The Nazarene Youth International (NYI) president [¶810.105]
- The Nazarene Missions International (NMI) president [¶162.2]
- Those with a local preacher's licence [¶115.9]
- The presidents or leaders of other groups in the church, such as women's and men's fellowships.

Elections

Earlier, we discussed the characteristics and requirements of being a leader in the Church of the Nazarene. Based on that description, at the annual church meeting, the church members elect people to the following positions of leadership.

- at least three stewards [¶147]
- at least three trustees [¶151]

THE LOCAL CHURCH

- a president of Nazarene Discipleship International (NDI) [¶156]
- the board of Nazarene Discipleship International (NDI) [¶155]
- Presidents or leaders of other groups, such as women's or men's fellowships.
- Delegates to the district assembly, if the church board doesn't elect them [¶22.3; 113.10; 201.1-201.2]

The work of the pastor

A pastor is a minister who has oversight of a local church [¶124-131]. Usually, he or she is either an elder or a licensed minister (someone who received a minister's licence from the district assembly) [¶117, 524]. A pastor feels a divine call to preach the Word of God and to care for God's people. She or he has many responsibilities and the job requires a lot of work. Here is a list of the type of work, divided into two main categories [¶123-131].

The core duties of the pastor are...

- ... to pray.*
- ... to preach the Word of God.*
- ... to train the people of the church to do ministry (evangelism).*
- ... to perform religious duties (baptism, communion, weddings, and funerals).*

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... to look after the people of the church, this includes

- visiting them;*
- caring for the sick and poor;*
- comforting those who mourn;*
- encouraging people to become Christlike disciples;*
- helping sinners to repent and to turn to God;*
- helping Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit and live a holy life;*
- teaching believers and strengthening their faith.*

... to help others who feel God's call to ministry.

... to continue to study and to learn.

... to maintain his or her spiritual life through personal devotions.

The administrative duties of the pastor are...

... to receive people into membership.

... to oversee the various departments of the church (NYI, NMI, NDI, women's fellowship, men's ministry, etc.).

... to prepare a report to the annual church meeting and to the district assembly.

... to make sure all money that is collected is spent properly.

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... to sign official documents, sometimes with the secretary of the church.

The call and installation of the pastor

When a church wants to ask someone to become its pastor, this is known as ‘calling a pastor.’ The process involves many people including local and district leaders and church members. Here is the process. [¶117-121]

1. **The church board meets with the district superintendent.** The superintendent will help the church board to find the right person. The board must choose an elder or a person with a minister’s licence to be the pastor. At least two-thirds of the members of the board must agree on the person, and the district superintendent must approve the decision. The person is then known as ‘the candidate’.

IS THE PASTOR AN EMPLOYEE?

Being a pastor is not like a regular job. Instead of ‘employing’ a pastor, churches ‘call a pastor’. However, the church should provide a salary and other employment benefits if they can.

2. **The church board presents the candidate’s name to the congregation.** The members of the church will vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on whether they want to invite

the candidate to become their pastor. At least two-thirds of the votes must be 'yes' in order to elect the candidate.

3. **The church board and the candidate make arrangements.** The church board and the candidate will clearly communicate their goals and expectations to each other in writing. This includes the salary that the new pastor will receive.
4. **The candidate responds.** The candidate must reply to the call within 15 days. After accepting, he or she becomes the pastor.
5. **The installation service.** If possible, the district superintendent will organise an installation service where the new pastor and the congregation will celebrate their unity and direction. If the superintendent cannot be present, the church and pastor may organise the service by themselves.

In some cases, the church board does not vote on a new pastor. Instead, the district superintendent and the advisory board appoint a pastor. This happens in the following cases. [¶119]

- The church is not yet five years old.
- The church has less than 35 members who voted at the last meeting.
- The church receives regular financial assistance from the district.

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The relationship between the pastor and the church

Every two years the pastor and the church board have a meeting to review the expectations, goals, and performance of the church and pastor. We call the agreement ‘the Local Church/Pastoral Relationship.’ [¶122]

The district superintendent must be told of the meeting so that he or she may participate. The aim of the meeting is to take care of any problems and differences and to find solutions in a spirit of love, acceptance, and reconciliation. If a member of the board is the spouse of the pastor, he or she will not be part of the review process. [¶133.1]

After someone completes two years of service as pastor, the church board, the pastor, and the district superintendent will meet. As usual, they will discuss the relationship between the pastor and the church. However, at this meeting the district superintendent (or a representative) will work with the board to see if it wants to ask the pastor to continue for four more years [¶123].

The church board

Every church has a board. The members of the church board are as follows.

- The pastor
- The stewards

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- The trustees
- The NDI President
- The NYI president
- The NMI president

In some cases, additional people will be elected to the church board, but it will not have more than 25 members. If there are ministers (ordained or licensed) who are members of the congregation but do not have a ministerial assignment, they are not eligible to be on the church board.

Board members should exemplify the highest standards of Nazarene faith and practice. The church should elect those who believe in entire sanctification, who live godly lives, and who support the church and its doctrines. They should also be regular in attendance and committed to tithing.

The church board meets at least once every two months. Some church boards meet every month.
[¶137-138]

The duties of the church board are...

- ... to work with the pastor to look after the church.*
- ... to call a new pastor.*
- ... to work with the pastor to develop a written statement of their goals and expectations. This is done every year, and it includes the pastor's salary.*

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- ... to arrange for someone to preach if there is no pastor.*
- ... to review the relationship between the church and the pastor every two years.*
- ... to elect a treasurer and secretary. The pastor is the chairperson of the church board.*
- ... to elect at least three people to form an evangelism and church membership committee.*
- ... to make sure that the financial obligations of the church are paid. This includes the Nazarene 'budgets' (funds for the operations of the district, schools, and the World Evangelism Fund).*
- ... to make sure that all church finances are supervised properly. A finance report is required for every church board meeting and for the annual church meeting.*
- ... to appoint at least two people to count all church offerings.*
- ... to prepare a budget to cover the work of the church each year. This budget must also include amounts for NMI, NYI, NDI, schools and other organisations of the church.*
- ... to assign people to a committee to monitor the finances and to report to the board if there are any problems.*
- ... to approve or renew the licence of local preachers or lay pastors, if the pastor recommends them. If a local*

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preacher has a licence for at least one year, the church board may recommend to the district assembly that he or she receive a minister's licence.

... to arrange a sabbatical for the pastor every seven years.

The church board has a lot of responsibility. In addition to all of the duties listed, the church board is also responsible for all other affairs that are not specifically assigned to the pastor. [¶139-140]

The church secretary

The church board elects the secretary, who must be a member of the church.

The duties of the church secretary are...

... to keep the 'minutes' of all church meetings and all church board meetings. Minutes are official records of all the activity of a meeting. The secretary should make sure that they are carefully preserved. The minutes should always include the names of all board members and which ones attended.

... to give a report to the church meeting of the activities of the church including the number of church members.

... to care for all the legal papers belonging to the church.

... to tell the district superintendent the results of a vote for a pastor.

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... to sign, with the pastor, the legal documents of the church.

[¶145]

The church treasurer

The church board elects the treasurer, who must be a member of the church.

The duties of the church treasurer are...

... to receive the offerings on behalf of the church and to spend the church's money when authorized to do so by the church board.

... to record all income and expenditure in a proper financial record book.

... to give a report to the church meeting and every church board meeting.

[¶146]

The stewards

The role of the steward in the church is to help in areas of practical service to others. All stewards are also members of the church board. They are elected at the annual church meeting, or the church board may assign some board members to be stewards. The stewardship committee encourages people to give generously of time, talent, and money to the Lord's work.

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The stewardship committee consists of at least three but not more than 13 members.

The duties of the stewards are...

- ... to oversee the various outreach efforts of the church, including evangelism and starting new churches.*
- ... to provide help to people who are needy and troubled. They should encourage, visit, and care for the sick and needy. Also, they should involve other church members in ministry to needy people in the community.*
- ... to help the pastor, as needed, to prepare and to serve communion.*
- ... to serve as the evangelism and church membership committee and church growth committee if the church does not vote separately for these committees.*

[¶147-150]

The trustees

The role of the trustee is to be responsible for the church building and property. Like stewards, all trustees are members of the board. During the annual church meeting, the members of the church will elect trustees to the church board, or the church board may assign some of its members to be trustees. There will be at least three but not more than nine trustees.

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The duties of the trustees are...

... to oversee the use and maintenance of all the land and buildings belonging to the church.

... to help develop the financial plans for the church, including the pastor's salary.

[¶151-154]

The education committee (Nazarene Discipleship International)

The education committee is responsible for looking after the work of the Sunday School, discipleship, children's club, Bible studies, and all of the teaching ministries of the church. Officially, the name of this committee is the Nazarene Discipleship International Board. Often we call it, simply, the NDI board or the Sunday School board. In churches with less than 75 members, the church board may act as the education committee.

The members of this committee are...

... the president of the discipleship board (NDI). This person is sometimes called the Sunday School superintendent.

... the pastor

... the president of the missions committee (NMI)

... the president of the youth council (NYI)

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- ... the president of the children's committee*
- ... the president of any adult ministries*
- ... at least three but no more than nine members elected to the committee at the annual church meeting.*

The task of this committee is to reach the largest number of unchurched people possible for Christ.

The goals of the NDI are...

- ... to find ways to bring people into the church fellowship.*
- ... to teach the Word of God effectively.*
- ... to teach the doctrines of the Christian faith.*
- ... to help the people of the church become Christlike disciples in character, attitudes, and habits.*
- ... to help strengthen Christian homes.*
- ... to prepare believers for membership in the church.*
- ... to equip the church members for appropriate Christian ministries.*
- ... to choose the curriculum to be used in all of the church's educational programmes.*
- ... to nominate people to chair various committees. (The pastor will then approve the names and present them to the annual church meeting for election.)*

[¶155-159]

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The youth committee (Nazarene Youth International)

The NYI committee organises the church's ministry to young people. NYI stands for Nazarene Youth International. The NYI council's goal is to help to disciple young people.

The members of this committee are elected at an annual meeting of all youth and those who work with young people in the church. Only a member of the church may be elected to serve on the NYI council. The council is usually composed of a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Additional members may be elected if necessary.

The goals of the NYI are...

- ... to help young people to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour.*
- ... to instruct them in the word of God and the doctrines of the church.*
- ... to disciple them so that they grow in the Christian faith and holy character.*
- ... to help them become church members actively engaged in its work.*
- ... to equip them so that they will be involved in ministry.*

[¶150; 810]

The missions committee (Nazarene Missions International)

Most Nazarene churches organise an NMI committee to help focus on world evangelism and missionary work. NMI stands for Nazarene Missions International. The NMI council works in the local church to generate interest and support for the missionary work of the church in other countries. The NMI council is usually composed of a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Additional members may be elected if necessary.

The goals of the NMI are...

- ... to encourage people to pray for those who are not yet Christians.*
- ... to inform the church about the work of the church in other countries.*
- ... to help young people to hear God's call and to give themselves to Christian service.*
- ... to encourage people to give generously to the work of world evangelism.*

[¶162-164.3; 811]

Other ministries of the church

Local churches will often organise additional groups and committees. For instance, many churches have women's and men's fellowships. These are not all listed

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in the Manual, but they should be organised in a similar way to the NMI and the NYI. It is a good idea if the presidents of these groups also serve on the church board just like the NYI president and NMI president.

Discussion questions

1. It seems like pastors have a lot of work to do since they are both spiritual leaders as well as administrators. How can a local church help the pastor not 'burn-out' from all the work?

2. How does the church board contribute to the overall mission of the church?

3. Why do we call the ministries of NDI, NYI, and NMI 'local' when the 'I' stands for 'International'? How active and effective is your local church in these ministries?

CHAPTER SEVEN

The district

The local Nazarene churches in a geographical area are combined together to form a district. The leader of each district is called the district superintendent. Each year representatives from all the local churches meet together in what is called a district assembly. Each district is part of a larger group of districts called a region, led by a regional director. Some regions also group districts together into fields, which are led by a field strategy coordinator

There are three different levels of districts. [¶200.2]

A phase 1 district

When the Church of the Nazarene begins to work in a new country or a new area, it is called a phase 1 district. The regional director recommends someone to be appointed as the superintendent. The general superintendent will make the final decision and appoint the person to the post.

A phase 2 district

A phase 2 district has at least 10 organised churches, 500 full members and 5 ordained elders. At least half

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of the finances needed for district administration will come from within the district.

The advisory board of a district may request that it be recognized as a phase 2 district. If the regional leadership believes that a phase 1 district is ready to move to the next phase, they will make a recommendation to the Board of General Superintendents who will make the decision. The district superintendent may be elected or appointed.

A phase 3 district

A phase 3 district is one that demonstrates mature leadership, financial support, faithfulness to the doctrines of the church, and a vision for the growth of the global church.

A phase 3 district has at least 20 organised churches, 1,000 members, 10 ordained elders, and raises all the money needed for district administration.

The district superintendent will be elected by the district assembly.

HOW FAST CAN DISTRICTS CHANGE PHASES?

As fast as possible
as long as there are
enough members,
mature leaders, and
churches to sustain
the new phase.

The district assembly

Each district holds a special meeting once a year called the district assembly. At this meeting, the representatives from the local churches elect district leaders, conduct business, and hear reports from pastors and district boards. It is also a time for worship, fellowship, and training for service in the church. It is an opportunity to build enthusiasm and emphasise the vision and mission of the district.

The general superintendent decides the date and time of the district assembly. The district superintendent and the district advisory board decide where the district assembly will be held. [¶201-204]

A member of a district assembly must also be a member of a local church on that district.

The members of the district assembly are...

- ... the delegates elected by each local church*
- ... all ordained ministers (elders and deacons)*
- ... all pastors with minister's licences issued by the district assembly*
- ... the district secretary*
- ... the district treasurer*
- ... the district NDI president*
- ... the district NYI president*

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- ... the district NMI president*
- ... the presidents of any other district councils*
- ... the newly elected NDI president of each local church*
- ... the newly elected NYI president of each local church*
- ... the newly elected NMI president of each local church*
- ... the members of the district advisory board*

The local church's delegates to the district assembly

The delegates of the local church are usually elected at their church's annual meeting. Sometimes, the church decides to allow the church board to select its delegates. All delegates must be lay members of their local church. A layperson is someone who is not an ordained minister and does not have a minister's licence from the district.

The number of delegates from each church depends on two things: the number of members of a local church and the size of the district. [¶201.1-201.2]

If the district has fewer than 5,000 members

Each church will elect at least 2 delegates. If the church has more than 75 members, it may elect one extra delegate for each additional group of fifty members. For instance:

- 1 to 75 members: 2 delegates
- 76 to 125 members: 3 delegates

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126 to 175 members : 4 delegates

176 to 225 members : 5 delegates

etc.

If the district has 5,000 or more members

For larger districts that have 5,000 or more members, each local church sends one fewer delegate. So:

1 to 75 members : 1 delegate

76 to 125 members : 2 delegates

126 to 175 members : 3 delegates

176 to 225 members : 4 delegates

etc.

This means that each local church may send the following people to the district assembly.

- The pastor (if he or she is licensed or ordained)
- The NDI president
- The NYI president
- The NMI president
- One or more delegates, depending upon the size of the church and the district.

The work of the district assembly

The duties of the district assembly are to receive reports, to elect leaders, and to transact other business. The district assembly will also elect members to various positions as leaders and members of committees. Some of these positions are for more than one year, so not all

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of these will be elected every time the district assembly meets together. The district assembly will also perform other official actions, based on recommendations that come from its committees and local churches.

The district assembly will receive reports from...

- ... the district superintendent [¶205.3]*
- ... each ordained minister and anyone who has a minister's licence issued by the district [¶205.4]*
- ... the advisory board [¶222.25]*

The district assembly will elect...

- ... the district superintendent*
- ... the advisory board*
- ... the board of ministry*
- ... the NDI board of the district*
- ... the delegates to the General Assembly (once every four years)*
- ... other boards and committees*

Other work of the district

Every year is different, but typically the district assembly will also do other business. It may vote ...

- ... to grant minister's licences to pastors who are not yet ordained*

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... to approve pastors for ordination

*... to approve pastors from other denominations to
become pastors in the Church of the Nazarene*

... to review and approve the reports of the district

The district superintendent

The district superintendent is the leader of the district and must be an ordained elder in the Church of the Nazarene. In phase 1 districts, the superintendent is appointed by the general superintendent. In phase 2 districts, the superintendent may be appointed or elected. In phase 3 districts, the superintendent is elected by the district assembly. In order to be elected, a person must receive votes from two-thirds of the district assembly members. [¶209.1]

After completing two years, the district superintendent may be re-elected. A district superintendent may be re-elected without anyone else on the ballot. In this case, the district assembly members will vote 'yes' or 'no.' The district superintendent must receive positive votes from two-thirds of the members to be re-elected. If re-elected, he or she will serve for four years. [¶208]

If a district superintendent resigns or is not re-elected, the district assembly will continue to vote until someone is elected. The delegates may vote for any elder in

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the Church of the Nazarene. They will keep voting until one elder receives two-thirds of the votes.

The work of the district superintendent

The district superintendent may also be a pastor of a local church. However, he or she has a lot of work to do, so often she or he does not pastor a church. [¶211–218.1]

The district superintendent *helps local churches* and *leads the district*.

Helping local churches

The district superintendent is sometimes called ‘the pastor to the pastors.’ He or she also works with local churches in many other ways. The duties of the district superintendent are...

- ... to organise, strengthen, and encourage local churches.*
- ... to meet with church boards to review the work of the pastor.*
- ... to help church boards call a new pastor.*
- ... to meet with church boards and pastors that need help in times of trouble (spiritual, financial, pastoral, etc.).*
- ... to help guide mission churches, stations, and preaching points that are not yet organised.*
- ... to approve someone for a local preacher’s licence, if the pastor is not ordained.*

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- ... to conduct the annual church meeting of a local church if there is no pastor or if there is trouble in the church.*
- ... to approve requests from pastors and church boards to employ someone as a paid minister, such as a youth minister or an associate pastor.*

Leading the district

Working with the advisory board, the district superintendent is responsible...

- ... to present a clear vision for evangelism, church planting, church growth, and the development of churches on the district.*
- ... to chair the advisory board.*
- ... to conduct the district assembly if the general superintendent is not present.*
- ... to be a member of all district boards and committees.*
- ... to appoint a replacement if a district leader resigns from a position, for example the district secretary or the district treasurer.*

The district superintendent is not allowed to spend district money without the approval of the advisory board. He or she and all immediate family members (spouse, parents, children, and siblings) are not allowed to sign checks on any district account without the approval of

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the district assembly and the written authorisation of the advisory board. [¶217]

The district secretary and treasurer

The district secretary and the treasurer are elected by the advisory board. They serves for one, two, or three years and may be re-elected. [¶219-223.2]

The duties of the district secretary are...

- ... to keep minutes of the district assembly and to preserve the minutes and statistics.*
- ... to send a copy of all district reports to the field or regional office.*
- ... to refer any requests or items of business to the proper committee.*
- ... to look after all the legal papers that belong to the district.*

The duties of the district treasurer are...

- ... to receive and disburse the district's money. The treasurer must follow the policies and directions of the advisory board and the district assembly.*
- ... to keep a careful record of all money received and spent, and to prepare financial reports. The treasurer will give a monthly report to the district superintendent.*

... to give an annual report to the district assembly.

The advisory board

The members of this board are elected each year at the district assembly. The board will have laypeople and ordained ministers. Pastors who have a minister's licence may not serve on the advisory board. The board helps the district superintendent lead and govern the district. [¶224-228]

The members of this board are...

... the district superintendent

... up to three ordained ministers

... up to three laypersons

If a district grows beyond 5,000 members, it is allowed to elect additional members to the advisory board.

The district superintendent chairs the advisory board. In phase 1 and phase 2 districts, the field strategy coordinator may appoint a missionary representative to serve on it.

The duties of this board are...

... to counsel the district superintendent concerning the ministers and local churches on the district. They also give advice related to any district board or committee.

... to elect a district treasurer and a district secretary.

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- ... to give a recommendation to the district assembly for anyone who is applying for a district minister's licence or pastors who want to renew their licence.*
- ... to oversee all the property and buildings belonging to the district.*
- ... to examine the testimony, background, and ordination papers of a pastor from another denomination who desires to join the Church of the Nazarene.*
- ... to handle the transfer of ministers to other districts and those coming from other districts.*
- ... to perform other official duties that are not explicitly assigned to the district superintendent.*

The board of ministry

This board is responsible for evaluating and developing those who are in the process of becoming ordained ministers. Sometimes this board is broken into two boards: the ministerial credentials board and the ministerial studies board. [¶205.17]

The ministerial credentials board

This committee has at least five elders. The district superintendent is a member and chairs the meetings. The board will elect a secretary to keep a good record of all the decisions of the board. The members carefully examine anyone who desires to receive a minister's licence

or to be ordained. If a pastor has a minister's licence, then he or she must be approved by this board every year until he or she is ordained.

The board evaluates the person in three areas. [¶231]

1. Christian experience. Someone who wants to become a minister in the Church of the Nazarene must have a clear experience of salvation and of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The board will look for evidence that the person has gifts and graces for ministry.

2. Beliefs. The board will ask questions to ensure that the person has a good knowledge of the Bible as well as the doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene. They will also ask questions to make sure that he or she accepts those doctrines as true, and not just as something to be studied.

3. Lifestyle. Anyone who wants to be a minister in the Church of the Nazarene must support the standards of conduct and follow the church's rules.

The ministerial studies board

This committee has five or more elders. It watches over the study programme of those people who are working toward ordination. The members encourage, guide, and assist them in their training. [¶232—234]

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Other boards and committees of the district

The district assembly elects important committees and boards that help it function properly, including finances, organisation of meetings, evangelism efforts, and many other tasks. The district superintendent is always a member of these boards, and they usually have an equal number of ministers and laypeople.

The three main boards and councils of a district are the same ones for a local church: discipleship (NDI), youth (NYI), and (missions) NMI.

The district discipleship board (NDI)

The district NDI assists the churches with discipleship and education training and programs. The members of this board are...

- ... the district superintendent*
- ... the district missions president (NMI)*
- ... the district youth president (NYI)*
- ... the chairperson of the board*
- ... at least three elected members*

The board elects a secretary, a treasurer, and the directors of three district ministries: adults, children, and continuing lay education. These people become members of the NDI board if they are not already on it. [¶241—242.3]

The district youth council (NYI)

The district NYI is responsible for planning ministry activities for young people on the district. The members of the council are elected at an NYI convention each year. There is a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer plus additional members and ministry directors. [¶242]

The district missions council (NMI)

The district NMI works to inform and inspire people about the evangelism efforts of the Church of the Nazarene around the world. The members of the council are elected at an NMI convention each year. There is a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer plus three additional members. [¶243]

Discussion questions

1. In what ways does the district superintendent serve as a 'pastor to the pastors'?
2. How active is your local church in district activities? How might the district assembly strengthen communication and collaboration between local churches?
3. What are the key factors that determine when a district transitions from phase 1 to phase 2, and then to phase 3?

CHAPTER EIGHT

The General Assembly

The Church of the Nazarene is at work in over 160 different countries around the world. Every four years, delegates from all the districts gather together in June for the church's most important meeting: the General Assembly. At this meeting, the delegates are able to vote on changes to the Manual. [¶301]

The members of the General Assembly are...

... the elected delegates from all the districts around the world

... the general superintendents, including retired ones

... the directors and presidents of all the departments and ministries of the international Church of the Nazarene

Most of the members are delegates elected by districts. For phase 3 districts, half the delegates are laypersons and half are ordained ministers who have an assignment on the district. The district superintendent is one of the ministers. The district assembly will also elect alternates to replace a delegate who is unable to attend the General Assembly. The number of delegates from phase 3 districts depends on the number of members. [¶301.1]

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Up to 6,000 members : four delegates
6,001 to 10,000 members : six delegates
10,001 to 15,000 members : eight delegates
15,001 to 20,000 members : ten delegates
etc.

Phase 2 districts are allowed just two delegates. The ministerial delegate is the district superintendent, and the district assembly elects the lay delegate. Phase 1 districts may send the district superintendent as a delegate. He or she may participate but cannot vote.

The work of the General Assembly

The General Assembly has a lot of work to do each time it meets [¶305-305.9].

The duties of the General Assembly are...

- ... to elect six general superintendents.*
- ... to elect the members of the General Board, and other international boards and committees.*
- ... to accept or reject requests to change the Manual.*

Districts are able to suggest changes for the General Assembly to consider. These are called 'resolutions'. Resolutions are sent to committees for discussion, and the committees recommend whether to accept or reject them. In most cases, the recommendations are sent to the General Assembly, which will discuss and vote on each

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one. This is how the church's Manual can be changed. However, the constitution of the Manual (§1—26) is special. Changes to the constitution require the approval of two-thirds of all phase 1 and phase 2 districts.

The Board of General Superintendents

There are six general superintendents who are all ordained elders. They must be at least 35 and not yet 70 years old when they are elected. They supervise the work of the church around the world. They meet every three months as the Board of General Superintendents. Each region is assigned a different general superintendent every two years. [§306-307.16; 315-324]

The general superintendents provide spiritual leadership of the church by...

- ... articulating the mission of the church.*
- ... casting vision for the future of the church.*
- ... ordaining ministers.*
- ... raising awareness of our theology.*
- ... providing general oversight of the work of the church.*

They provide administrative leadership of the church by...

- ... presiding over the General Assembly and the meetings of the General Board.*

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- ... presiding over the district assemblies or appointing someone to take their place.*
- ... presiding over ordination ceremonies and ordaining elected ministers.*
- ... appointing district superintendents if there is a vacancy between district assemblies. They do this after consultation with the advisory board and the other leaders of the district.*
- ... overseeing all the boards and departments of the general church.*
- ... deciding, together with the General Board, how the 'World Evangelism Fund' (WEF) should be spent. This fund is the combined money donated by all churches from around the world to support the work of the denomination.*
- ... interpreting the church's laws and doctrines.*

A general superintendents may take other actions as needed, as long as they align with the Manual.

The General Board

The General Board has about 40 members who meet once a year. Each region nominates lay members and ordained ministers based on the number of Nazarenes in the region. They are elected by delegates at the General Assembly. The general treasurer and general

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secretary are also members, and some international organisations like NYI and NMI elect additional members. The General Board oversees the church's global work and ensures all departments work together. Along with the Board of General Superintendents, it decides how to allocate the World Evangelism Fund. The Board also receives reports from all church departments. [¶331—341]

Discussion questions

1. How does a district participate in the General Assembly?
2. In what ways do the resolutions process and voting power shape the direction of the Church of the Nazarene's policies?
3. How does the leadership of the general superintendents balance their spiritual and administrative responsibilities in overseeing the global church?

*The current
superintendents
(5 men and 1
woman) come
from four different
continents.*

CHAPTER NINE

The minister

The Church of the Nazarene teaches that all believers are called to minister to their family, friends, and neighbours. However, it also recognises that the Lord calls certain women and men to the more formal work of public ministry. When the church identifies someone with such a calling, it is responsible for examining that call and providing opportunities for the individual to enter ministry. In most cases, these individuals are referred to as pastors, although they may also serve as deacons.

In the Church of the Nazarene, the term ‘minister’ includes both elders and deacons. The word ‘clergy’ refers to all ordained elders, ordained deacons, and those holding a minister’s licence issued by their district.

There are three levels of ministers in the Church of the Nazarene. They are:

1. The **local minister**, approved by the local church board
2. The **licensed minister**, approved by the district assembly
3. The **ordained minister**, approved by the district assembly and ordained by the general superintendent

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as an elder or a deacon. Ordination is a special ceremony where a minister is consecrated to the task of ministry.

The local minister

A local minister must be a member of the Church of the Nazarene. He or she is licensed by the local church board and works under the direction of the pastor. This arrangement allows local ministers to use and develop their ministerial gifts and skills. Receiving a local minister's licence marks the beginning of a process of lifelong learning.

If the pastor of the local church is an elder, the local church board may issue the licence, which is then signed by the church secretary and the pastor. However, if the pastor is not an elder, their recommendation must first be approved by the district superintendent.

Before granting a local minister's licence, the pastor and board must evaluate the candidate's experience of salvation, understanding of biblical doctrines, and familiarity with the Manual. Candidates must also demonstrate the necessary spiritual gifts for ministry and evidence of spiritual maturity.

The licence is valid for one year but may be renewed. Local ministers are required to pursue the course of study for ministers. If, after two years, the minister has

not completed at least two courses, the licence will not be renewed.

Local ministers remain laypersons. So, they can not officiate at marriages or administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The licensed minister

The next level of ministry involves recognition by the district assembly. Applicants must be members of the Church of the Nazarene and must demonstrate a clear call to lifelong ministry. Here are the requirements for a local minister to receive a minister's licence from the district:

- The applicant must be a local minister for at least one year.
- The applicant must receive the approval of his or her local church board. If he or she is the pastor of a church, the advisory board must approve.
- The applicant must complete at least one full year of an approved course of study, typically through a Nazarene school.
- The applicant must carefully fill out an application for a minister's licence and submit it to the board of ministry.
- The applicant will be interviewed by the board of ministry to assess their suitability for ministry.

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- The district assembly will vote whether to approve the license.

The licensed minister is either working toward becoming an elder or a deacon. After receiving the initial licence, the minister has ten years to complete the course of study.

Those who have a minister's licence from the district may be assigned as pastors of churches on their district. Provided they complete the required courses of study, they are authorised to preach and administer the sacraments within their own congregations. Where permitted by local laws, the licensed minister may also officiate at marriages.

The district licence is for one year, but it may be renewed. Once a licence is given, the pastor must meet the following requirements in order to have the licence renewed.

- The minister must have an unexpired district licence and complete an application for renewal each year.
- The minister must be approved by the advisory board.
- The minister must have completed at least two more courses in the course of study.
- The minister must demonstrate that he or she has spiritual gifts and usefulness for the work.

- The minister must be approved by the board of ministry and the district assembly.
- The minister cannot renew a licence after ten years unless there are special circumstances.
- The minister must have the goal to be ordained as an elder or deacon in the Church of the Nazarene.

The ordained minister

In the Church of the Nazarene, we recognize two types of ordained ministers: the deacon and the elder.

The ordained deacon

The deacon is a person who feels called to full time Christian service, but not a call to preach. Some deacons serve as full time workers with children or youth, some work as educators or hospital chaplains, some do full time visitation work in a large church, and others are involved full time in compassionate ministries.

The deacon is given authority to administer sacraments, and on occasion to conduct worship and preach. The steps to become an ordained deacon are the same as those to become an ordained elder except

WHY ARE SOME MINISTERS CALLED 'PASTOR'

While there may be changes from country to country, typically only licensed or ordained ministers are called 'pastor' while 'reverend' is used for ordained ministers.

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that there are some differences in the required studies.
[¶525]

The ordained elder

The position of ordained elder is for those who have a clear call from God to preach his Word. We expect our pastors to give their full energy to a lifetime of Christian service. This is a permanent position and the ordination does not need to be renewed every year. [¶526]

A pastor with a minister's licence must complete many requirements in order to be ordained as an elder. He or she must ...

- ... graduate from a validated course of study for ministers.*
- ... serve as a pastor for three consecutive years (or more) while holding a district licence. For ministers serving part-time, the district may require more than three years of service.*
- ... receive the recommendation for renewal of the minister's licence by the church board or the advisory board.*
- ... be carefully evaluated and approved by the board of ministry and receive its recommendation.*
- ... be in good standing with the church. This means that there are no disqualifications on his or her record.*

... receive a favourable vote of two-thirds of the members of the district assembly to recommend the candidate for ordination.

The ordination of a new elder or deacon happens at a special service conducted by the general superintendent, usually at the time of the district assembly. The general superintendent along with the other elders and deacons will lay hands on the minister and ordain him or her as an elder or deacon in the Church of the Nazarene.

Ministers from other churches

Ordained and licensed ministers from other evangelical denominations may sometimes wish to join the Church of the Nazarene. In such cases, the advisory board must first determine whether the individual's conduct, personal experience, and doctrinal beliefs align with the Church of the Nazarene. If approved, they may transfer their membership and ministerial credentials to the district. [¶527]

Retirement from the ministry

Ordination as a minister is permanent and does not require annual renewal. Even so, elders and deacons are required to submit an annual report to the district assembly, including those who are retired. However, some ministers may be exempted from this requirement in certain circumstances. [¶528.2]

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Resignation or removal from the ministry

The ordination certificate represents a covenant between the minister and the church. It remains valid only if the minister's life and teaching align with the church's doctrines and practices.

Ordained ministers must not regularly conduct independent church activities outside the Church of the Nazarene without advisory board approval. If an elder or deacon joins another denomination, they cease to be a Nazarene minister and are no longer a member. [¶531.4]

Ministers may resign from ministry by sending their credentials to the district superintendent, who forwards them to the general secretary for safekeeping. Ministers unassigned for four or more years may be marked as 'removed' by the district assembly. [¶531-531.2]

Sadly, sometimes it is necessary to discipline a member of the clergy. In cases of proven misconduct or doctrinal deviation, an elder or deacon is no longer a minister. The Manual outlines the process in detail. [¶531; 606.1]

Discussion questions

1. What are the three levels of ministry in the Church of the Nazarene, and what distinguishes each level?

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2. How does the process of ordination in the Church of the Nazarene reflect the responsibilities and expectations of a minister?

3. What must a minister from another church do to join the Church of the Nazarene, and how does the church make sure she or he agrees with its teachings?

IS GOD CALLING YOU TO BE A MINISTER?

If you think that God might be calling you to be a pastor or deacon, it is important to seek the wise council of other believers, especially your pastor. While you may begin the process of studying for the ministry, only the pastor and church board are able to grant you a local minister's license, and only someone who has a local minister's license for at least one year may apply for a district license.

CONCLUSION

The Church of the Nazarene is a wonderful organisation, but an organisation is only as good as its people. Nazarenes are some of the finest people in the world.

The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene may seem like a boring book of rules, policies, and procedures. However, it exists to help our church become more effective in accomplishing its great task to ‘Go and make disciples of all the nations.’ It exists to help those new disciples become more and more like Christ. It exists so the Kingdom of God will expand and grow and that many new people will discover what it means to live in holiness and love God with their whole hearts.

So as we work together, pastors and laypeople, let us remember these words from the Bible.

God’s word to church members

‘You are God’s dear children, so try to be like him. Live a life of love. Love others as Christ loved us’ (Ephesians 5:1, ERV).

God’s word to pastors and church leaders

‘Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of

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the church of God, which he bought with his own blood' (Acts 20:28).

'Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away' (1 Peter 5:3-4).