

V. Reports
A. DISTRICT OFFICERS
1. District superintendent

Dr. Jerry D. Porter, members and friends of this 33rd District Assembly of the Southern Florida District. I bring you my first report as district superintendent of our large and growing family. First, let me thank Dr. Nina Gunter, the Board of General Superintendents, and the Advisory Council for the confidence they placed in me by extending a call to become the third district superintendent of the Southern Florida District.

Home Again

Who, but our Omniscient Lord could have known, way back in 1972, that the first three superintendents of the Southern Florida District were together in attendance at the Pastors & Wives Retreat—of all places—at Lake Placid Conference Center.

Some of you may have heard me recount the events leading up to August 13, 2006, the day of my appointment. The day Dr. Schortinghouse notified the Advisory Board that he accepted the appointment to Arizona, a friend from Southern Florida called to give me the news. He asked me if I would be interested and that was that. The next morning in my devotional time, the Lord directed me to Isaiah 46:10-11 (NLT) where it says, “Only I can tell you what is going to happen even before it happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish...I have said I would do it, and I will.” About a week before the Advisory Council met, the Lord spoke to me again from his Word. This time in Jeremiah 29:10-11, “I will come and do for you all the good things I promised ...”

On the morning of August 13th the Lord took me back to Jeremiah 29:10 and the rest of verse 10 jumped out at me: “...and I will bring you home again. We boarded a plane for South Carolina. We were waiting to board in Charlotte for the last leg of our journey when Dr. Gunter gave me the news of my appointment to become the person to succeed our long-time friends and colleagues, Byron and Leanna Schortinghouse.

Home again. I was born in Tampa, raised in St. Petersburg; called to preach at junior high camp under the ministry of Dr. John L. Knight.; graduated from high school at Miami Edison during the time when my father, Clifton B. Nixon, served as pastor of the Miami Central church. My ministerial journey started in Melbourne, FL, when the entire state of Florida was one district. I was ordained at the district assembly when we voted to divide into three districts. I served as Youth Pastor at the Princeton church under Dr. Jack Stone, senior pastor. My relationships with some of our people stretch all the way back to high school, college and early ministry days. Yes, I am home again. And, I believe I am here by divine appointment for such a time as this. Thank you for opening your hearts to us.

Hurricane Wilma

We had been in the district parsonage for less than a month when Hurricane Wilma hit our western Gulfcoast; bounced across Lake Okeechobee; lingered awhile in Pahokee before exiting into the Atlantic. She left a huge swath across our eastern seaboard from Lake Worth in the north all the way to Key Largo in the south. The impact of Hurricane Wilma on many of our churches has been enormous. The initial price tag for the devastation was over \$1 million. Many places were without power for 28 days.

My second week on the job, I traveled to Houston, then to Kansas City, and finally to Irvine, CA, to present our needs and help coordinate our church's relief efforts. Caring Nazarenes from around the world sent relief offerings to Nazarene Disaster Response (NDR) reminiscent of “the grace of God given the Macedonian churches” in 2 Corinthians 8. Nazarenes “gave as much as they were able,” perhaps “beyond their ability. Fellow Nazarenes “did not do as we expected,” but shared a record amount of relief (\$4 million) for Gulfcoast Hurricane relief.

The SFD received \$527,454 in NDR and NCM funds from fellow Nazarenes around the world. We thank God for your generosity to us. Two other churches—the Venice church gave \$5,215 and Avon Park \$260, bringing the total to \$532,929. Through April 30th, the following churches and conference center received help: Carol City Ebenezer, Fort Lauderdale Faith, Fort Lauderdale First, Fort Lauderdale Manor, Fort Myers First, Hialeah Good Shepherd, Key Largo, Lake Worth New Life, LPCC, Miami Calvary, Miami Bethany, Miami First, Miami Grace, North Miami Haitian, Pompano Beach, Princeton, Margate Shema

Christ Fellowship, West Palm Beach Bélen. Not all repairs have been completed. Funds were disbursed to churches based on need and not on whether they were unable or unwilling to give to others in the payment of budgets.

Spending Forecast	
Church Property Reconstruction.....	\$ 213,088
Coordination, Communication, Equipment, Administration.....	\$ 77,116
Projects Underway but not completed.....	\$ 53,000
Coordination, Communication, & Administration yet to pay.....	\$ 1,239
Bids received and yet to be completed.....	\$ <u>200,000</u>
Sub-total.....	\$ 544,443

The little town of Pahokee on the eastern shores of Lake Okeechobee took a direct hit. By the end of the first week a Disaster Relief Center had been organized at our Pahokee Church under the leadership of Danny Moore. He reports 600 meals were served to police, fire and other relief personnel. Five hundred families were serviced per day for the three weeks following Hurricane Wilma. Eighteen semi-truck loads of food, water and supplies were distributed. A total of 8,300 families were served. Over 27,500 contacts made with needy families in the Pahokee area were documented. On Thanksgiving Day Kaye and I had the privilege of joining with our Pahokee church and SFD volunteers serving a delicious Thanksgiving meal to 1,000 from the community. We encountered the spirit of SFD Nazarenes giving, serving, and loving. You are my kind of people.

Roy Shuck gave great leadership in NDR and was named Coordinator for the entire SE Region this past year. He was of invaluable assistance to us and our efforts to meet the needs following Hurricane Wilma. We are ready to render a rapid response with the equipment and volunteer manpower come what may.

We have found that many of our pastors and relief workers have suffered “compassion fatigue,” and needed a break. So, Clergy Services in consultation with Gulfcoast Superintendents planned a retreat for them. I believe 12 of our pastors and our relief coordinator will be in attendance at Camp Garner, TN, on Memorial Day weekend for some much needed R&R.

One of our churches deserves special mention for having overcome great adversity. I speak of the West Palm Beach Belen church. Hurricane Wilma devastated their building and was rendered uninhabitable by the City of West Palm Beach. They were told that they would be fined \$1,000 a day if they used it. The place where they had been meeting closed its doors to them and they have been forced to hold services outside in the parking lot. But with NDR funds on hand, and an Alabaster grant of \$50,000, the \$135,000 cost should be underwritten.

Transitions

In the course of this past year, the Southern Florida District experienced many changes. The transition started in July with an ending—the ending of a whole network of relationships for the Schortinghouse’s and the Nixon’s, but for you as well. I would especially like to thank Phil Rice for donating and installing a new desk and bookshelves in my office.

In October, Trish Spear, accepted a new position in Children’s Ministry at the Pompano Church. In November, Trevecca Nazarene University inaugurated its new president, Dr. Dan Boone. In December, Marsha Taylor assumed the position of administrative assistant. The district office moved from Boynton Beach to Lake Placid. In late December, NDR funds were secured to hire a full-time Coordinator to assist our churches in Hurricane Wilma recovery. Merle Goodrich stepped into this position, but out of his position as manager of LPCC, necessitating yet another change. Anthony Haney was hired to replace him. These transitions all happened pretty fast and we really had no venue in which to thank those who served us until now. Nor have we officially welcomed new members of our team. One more change in personnel I am announcing for the Advisory Board, will occur after this year: Warren Whiting will complete a 34-year tenure as District Treasurer of the Southern Florida District at next year’s assembly. It would be a fitting tribute to Warren if this coming year was the best year SFD has ever had financially.

In this transitional year we’ve all had to let go of something and it has required adjustments. “Every beginning is a consequence. Every beginning ends something.” Those who have studied the management

of transition, tell us that “before you can begin something new, you have to end what used to be. Before you can learn a new way of doing things, you have to unlearn the old way. So beginnings depend on endings. The problem is, people don’t like endings.”¹ Letting go is difficult. So we mark the endings by acknowledging the jobs well done by our predecessors; but also, by treating the past with respect. We honor the past for what it has accomplished.

Our Record (as of 5/16/06)

God enabled our churches to raise \$12,719,859; add 998 New Nazarenes for a Total Membership of 15,202; Morning Worship attendance: 11,223; SS attendance averaged: 8,267 (+971 or + 11.7% increase)

Paid on District Ministries.....	\$ 420,223.00
Paid on World Evangelism Fund.....	\$ 701,997.79
Paid on Pensions & Benefits.....	\$ 180,551.00
Paid on Trevecca Nazarene University.....	\$ 233,882.00

What’s Over and What Isn’t

Honestly, this past year, at times I felt like the French politician who said, “There go my people. I must find out where they are going so that I can lead them.” I’ve spent a lot of time discovering where you are going. Things change, and obviously we won’t do some of the things we used to do. But which things? Not specifying what is over and what isn’t runs the risk of three equally serious difficulties: (1) People won’t dare to stop doing anything. They’ll try to do all the old things *and* new things. (2) People will make their own decisions about what to discard and what to keep, and the result will be chaos. (3) People will toss out everything that was done in the past, and the baby will disappear with the bathwater. As someone said, “Just because everything is different doesn’t mean anything has changed.” In the category of what’s over:

1. Changes in leadership personnel. We anticipate no further changes in leadership.
2. Change in the location of the district office. We are settled in Lake Placid and love it.
3. Failure to pay our Funds for Others in full. We must have participation from every local church in the payment of the District Ministries budget, Trevecca Nazarene University, Pensions and Benefits, and World Evangelism Fund.
4. Hurricane disaster relief—we hope Southern Florida does not take another direct hit from a Category 3 or higher hurricane in the next season. We are hardly finished with the repairs from Wilma.
5. Unfortunately, the Advisory Board cannot co-sign any further loans. The money we have in holdings serves as collateral for church loans. We need to liquidate the \$1.7 million in loans owed to the district, particularly an additional \$900,000 owed to individuals in demand notes. We have borrowed money to loan to churches or to pay operating expense and we cannot continue this practice.

Stability through change demands clarity about what we are trying to do. There is no reason to make an adjustment unless there is something to adjust. Before I mention what I believe isn’t over, I suggest that the practice of “continuous improvement” be our standard.

1. Our preparedness for Disaster Relief will continue. We hope we will not have to engage in this again, but we are ready for whatever Mother Nature throws at us with Zone Coordinators on each zone and a Rapid Response Team. We take care of our people and we will stand together come what may!
2. The dream of Lake Placid Conference Center will continue as a ministry of the Southern Florida District providing an atmosphere where the unsaved can come to know Christ, believers sanctified, and young people called to vocational ministry. Although this valuable piece of Florida real estate could be sold for at least \$10 million, your Advisory Board believes the dream is not over. Merle Goodrich laid a strong foundation and our new manager will be used of God to take this ministry to the next level in service to Jesus Christ by serving others.

¹ William Bridges, *Managing Transitions* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1991) p. 19.

But honestly, more of our people must share the dream with us if LPCC ever achieves its potential. Our ministry is donor and volunteer driven and constraints have been placed upon us from ever assessing a budget for the operation of this ministry. Thank you to each church and individual who donated cash, materials or services to LPCC this past year. A special word of thanks is due to David Childs who sent his work crews to complete the construction projects. Donations for the Youth Village fell far short of the goal and the Advisory Board approved a \$300,000 loan for LPCC to cover the costs of finishing the project which will include paving, new parking lots and landscaping.

3. Our evangelistic efforts to share the life-changing power of the Gospel so that all people groups in Southern Florida may know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord isn't over. It can never be! The fields are overripe and more and more workers are needed to get the harvest in. We are extremely gratified that our churches added 998 New Nazarenes to our membership rolls. Next year may God help us to add 1200.
4. Our discipleship efforts to make disciples through the nurture of new Christians so that they become fully functioning disciples and members of our churches. I urge every local church to engage in a viable follow-up program such as Dare to Care; every new convert should go through Basic Bible Studies; and every New Nazarene should be taken into membership through the door of a Membership Class that covers the Core Values of the Church of the Nazarene. We are Christian; we are Holiness; we are Missional.
5. Our ministry efforts through strong, growing churches will continue. Every local church is a ministry center and every member is a minister. In addition, opportunities for ministry for all age groups will continue through viable Sunday School Ministries, NMI, NYI, LPCC, Compassionate Ministries, Work & Witness, and a variety of local church initiatives.
6. Multiple opportunities for Christian fellowship through our local churches, zone activities, district and regional events will continue—camps for children and youth, retreats and other small group gatherings, including Sunday School classes.
7. Last night we organized the Port St. Lucie Haitian church and we hope that at least two others will be ready for organization in the coming year. The emphasis on church planting to reach the people groups on our district—Caribbean, Hispanic, Haitian, Anglo, African American and any other we can identify—must continue. With God's help we could exceed 100 churches on the Southern Florida District by 2009. Over this next year a Mission Strategy Team will be convened to develop the SFD strategy for evangelism and church planting on our mission field and identify target areas where NewStarts are needed. Funding for NewStarts is woefully inadequate. All of our resources are presently committed.
8. We will continue to partner with NDR and Mission USA/Canada to accomplish together what we cannot do by ourselves. SF Alabaster giving totaled \$ 57,433. Solid Rock Haitian received \$43,000 toward the purchase of a church building. And already in this new year we have received another \$50,000.
9. At the local, district and national levels we will continue to provide opportunities for further growth in church leadership through seminars, retreats and conventions. Regular opportunities for training and continuing education will be offered such as Pastor Prep Days as our pastors maintain their pursuit of lifelong learning.

New Initiatives

1. Leadership

- a. My wife and I would like to visit every church and NewStart on the district over this next year to experience firsthand the rich cultural diversity which is the SFD.
- b. I will continue to work on becoming current on all regular pastoral reviews. Reviews that are overdue will be dated from the due date in the journal.
- c. I will use the skills God has given me to help equip ministers for the task of leadership in the 21st century whenever He opens the door.

2. Holiness

- a. I am grieved when people tell me that they never hear a message on holiness, pastor. This must change.
- b. We need a renewed effort to call people to holiness of heart and life. I encourage every pastor to lead your people in *The Quest* this year.

3. Effective Communications

- a. Improved communications through a user-friendly website—sfnazarene.org. John Weller, our new pastor at Sarasota Trinity will serve as our webmaster.
- b. With the ever-increasing cost of postage, we'd like to move toward a totally electronic delivery of *The Heartbeat*, *The Flame*, the calendar, forms for camps, retreats—it's all there. Pastors, a special page has been established just for you. You will need to establish a login.

4. Pastoral Education

- a. A new initiative in Hispanic Ministerial Training has been launched with the establishment of the Hispanic Educational Advisory Committee. Juan Gallegos Timana will serve as Coordinator, and Ardee Coolidge Jr., as secretary. Master Teachers have been trained in the use of the USA-COSAC Module curriculum, and will be commissioned in the Ordination Service. Our vision is to prepare Hispanic men and women to be candidates for ordination and to prepare lay people to serve in the ministry of the local church.
- b. The modular Course of Study is being translated into French and when these materials are available, a similar track for our Haitian students will be launched.

5. New Awards

- a. Superintendent's Award will be presented next year to the small, intermediate, and large English-speaking churches as well as the Haitian and Hispanic church pastors who have shown the greatest gains in Membership, New Nazarenes, Total Money Raised, AM Worship, and SS attendance. To qualify, all budgets must be paid in full.
- b. The Sowers Award will be given to the Pastor and Church that sponsors a new church.

6. Participation

- a. Every pastor and local church should become a participant in giving Funds for others. If you paid zero this past year, I urge you to start by paying at least a tithe of your income for others.
- b. Presently, we have only 20% of our churches involved in District NYI Ministries. We need every church to become involved.

7. Prayer

- a. Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God's infinite grace and power. If we can somehow mobilize our lay people to discover the gift of intercession, we can be released to be all that God wants us to be.
- b. Our pastors and leaders need intercession. They have more responsibility and accountability. They are more subject to temptation. They are more targeted by spiritual warfare. "Christians, in general, have a target on their backs, but pastors have a bull's eye." They have more influence on others. They have more visibility.² I believe that intercession will improve our ministries and "release them to be all God wants them to be." And, Wagner says, "Intercession seems to help church growth."
- c. "There exists a tremendous reservoir of untapped prayer power in every church which can be affirmed, trained, and deployed to see the lost won, the apathetic revived, the 'backslider' restored and the committed made more effective."³ God helping us, I would like to mobilize at least 1,000 Prayer Partners across Southern Florida.
- d. I ask SF Nazarenes to respond to the call to prayer by entering into a Prayer Partner Covenant with me to:
 - i. Pray a specified number of minutes for your leaders during your devotional times.
 - ii. Pray regularly for our pastors & the health of our churches.
 - iii. Pray for specific requests that are made known to you.
 - iv. Become a "Digital Intercessor" receiving a monthly Prayer Initiative from the DS.
- e. The promise of prayer: "Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place" (2 Chronicles 7:15).

² C. Peter Wagner, *The Prayer Shield* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1992) 66-73.

³ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

Personal Accountability

In the six months of this year October 1 -- April 30th God enabled us to:

1. Preach 39 times; serve Communion 3 times; teach 6 Leadership Training Sessions at Pastor Prep Days
2. Travel 22,000 miles without accident or incident visiting 39 of our churches
3. Conduct 32 local church board meetings, 11 of which were reviews
4. Attend 4 General Church meetings: 2 for Nazarene Disaster Relief, 1 for Leadership Training, 1 DS Retreat
5. Install 4 new pastors in Covenant Services; participate in 1 Mortgage Burning Service
6. Attend 43 zone and district meetings, events, & gatherings
7. Represent Southern Florida at 2 Trevecca Trustee Board meetings
8. Preach 1 revival and 1 Faith Promise Convention
9. Secure \$527,454 in NDR & NCM funds to assist our pastors/churches in Hurricane Wilma relief
10. Secure \$43,000 in Alabaster Funds to assist in the purchase of church property.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. David F. Nixon