

NORTHEASTERN INDIANA DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

STATE OF THE DISTRICT 2019

DAVID G. ROLAND, DISTRICT SUPERINTEDEDENT

[video clip of Can you hear me now <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPwPo-IAQ-E>]

Actor Paul Marcarelli was the famous Verizon technician who for nine years assured us of cell phone service even in the most obscure locations. We have all been there. No one needs to explain the frustration of dropping a call or losing a tower. But even more frustrating is having an app that drastically drains your battery. Did you know researchers say that 90% of us suffer from Low Battery Anxiety? Look to your right, now look to your left. Nine out of ten people in this tabernacle are filled with anxiety over lack of battery power. The fear of being disconnected drives people to desperate measures. But what if suddenly your cell phone failed to function altogether and there was no charging station in sight. What if you lost all power? No texting, no email, no Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. What if there were no Bible apps, no Google, no Amazon shopping, or research capabilities? What if there was no camera, no alarm clock, no GPS, no movies or video games? What if, suddenly, you were totally and completely disconnected. Devastating, right?

What if you were totally and completely disconnected from the voice of God? How could you survive without His Good News and loving affirmation? Unfortunately, there are times when we hear the Good Shepherd say, "Can you hear Me? Can you hear Me now?"

When our daughters were in their pre-teens, they begged me to let them get their ears pierced. "Daddy, PLEASE! All of our friends have pierced ears." And my response was, "NO, you are too young." One Sunday during the morning message an entire row of little girls down front began giggling and pointing at the scripture. When the service ended, they came running to me with their Bible open to my text in Psalm 39. However, it was Psalm 40:6 that caught their attention. "Daddy, Daddy, it's biblical! Psalm 40:6 says, 'My ears you have pierced, O Lord.'" Yes! It worked! All ears were pierced.

The origin of that texts reads, "My ears you have opened." From Genesis to Revelation the scriptures urge us to open our ears and listen. "He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation 3:22 NIV). "

When our battery is fully charged and connected to the Source of all power, we will hear the Good News and help others to restore the Missional Connection. "Restoration" in the Greek is the act of repairing or renewing

something. It suggests the image of a broken bone adjusted back into place and then immobilized to enable healing. It is our mission to connect with those who are broken and share the Good News of God's restoration to all who will listen. Restore the Connection!

APPRECIATION

It is my great privilege to recognize just a few of the remarkable district leaders who are fully connected with us in this mission. District Advisory Board Members: Mark Dill, Paul White, Brady Wisehart, Larry Sheets, Jill Waltz, Debby Freeland, Marybeth Johnson, Dan Garde, Marie Secor, and Steve Doan. We owe a debt of gratitude to these fine leaders who are an invaluable resource.

Also faithfully devoted to the call are District Secretary, Jim Ballenger; District Treasurer, Jeff Kardatzke; NMI President, Laura High; NYI President, Dillan Ketcham; SDMI Chairman, Danny Hines; and Shiloh Park Board Chairman, Tom Hartman. The work of Marc Royer and Cortney Coombs as district consultants has been of great assistance. And the office assistants Jill Farmer, Jeanette Benbow, and Tiffany Ball have been life savers.

Shiloh Park is thriving under the capable direction of Kraig and Brandy Hannah. Their enthusiasm and vision are infectious. I appreciate all of these and the sweetheart of my life, Cheryl, who has tirelessly worked at my side without reservation.

STATISTICAL CONNECTION

It is the charge of the District Superintendent to annually report the progress of the district as it reflects an overview of the statistics and accomplishments of every local church.

The question is, how do we measure those accomplishments in today's media saturated culture? Imagine the multitude of ways Livestreaming, podcasts, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and other forms of media are available to enhance our communication of the Good News. Traditional standards of measurement fail to reflect the broad scope of ministry that technology affords us today. Being careful not to discount the value of tracking church membership, attendance, baptism, giving, and New Nazarenes, there are additional benchmarks of evaluation to help us in the measuring of our ministry effectiveness?

In an article entitled, "What are the New Measurements of a Successful Church," Caesar Kalinowski of Life Navigated Ministries, suggests ten benchmarks of a healthy missional church. Let me briefly reference eight of these benchmarks.

Located in the pastor's packets is a more complete list with work sheets to assess your progress.

<https://www.caesarkalinowski.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WHAT-ARE-THE-NEW-MEASUREMENTS-OF-A-SUCCESSFUL-CHURCH.pdf> .

Mentally evaluate your church as I summarize these benchmarks:

1. **Are mature disciples being made?** This is the #1 sign of a healthy church! Disciples make disciples; they don't just hang out or sit in rows together once a week.
2. **Do your relationships include not-yet-believers?** Is the relational base among those who are not a part of your church growing?
3. **Are believers of all ages being equipped for ministry and acts of service?**
4. **Are gospel conversations naturally taking place?** Is our verbal proclamation of the Good News increasing? Do your every day conversations include the gospel?
5. **Are indigenous leaders being developed?** Are new leaders, teachers and preachers coming to faith and service through your ministry?
6. **Are missional communities multiplying?** Are small groups and Sunday School classes reproducing?
7. **Are Church members willingly taking ownership and responsibility for ministry as addressed in Ephesians 4** ("Christ gave some apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and some teachers so that the body of Christ might be built up..." v. 12).
8. **Are people being "sent" out to start new works or new church plants?** It should be the most normal thing for a church or missional community to be sending their folks out to start new communities. Caesar Kalinowski asked, "Are we raising the kids to move out?" Are we measuring with these benchmarks in mind? How is your church doing? How is the district doing? We must restore the connection!

Ministry is messy. It's filled with the dichotomy of good times and bad times, and everything in between. In it, we find opportunities to celebrate but must also recognize our shortcomings and aggressively strive to overcome them. So, this evening let us celebrate our victories and pray over our losses with a vigilant determination to excel in God's power in this next year! Let's RESTORE THE CONNECTION!

2018-2019 Connectional Overview

- We celebrate 24+ Parent Affiliated Churches or Church Type Missions in process. That's incredible! What is a Parent Affiliated Congregation or PAC? It's a church within a church, not necessarily intended to organize as a church. It has a ministry leader who is responsible for pastoral care. For example, a nursing home ministry, satellite or multi-site church's, or organic churches, and new church plants are also considered PACS.

A Church Type Mission or a CTM, is a church not yet organized which may or may not have a sponsoring church and is intended from the start to become an organized church. Here are a few of the PAC's and CTM's the Holy Spirit is using to breathe new life into our local church ministry.

- Anderson First: Hispanic Ministry (PAC), Church in Iraq (CTM)
- Bluffton: Illumin 8 Trailer Ministry (PAC), 19 church plants in the Dominican Republic
- Elkhart Crossroads: Crossroads Connection (down town street ministry), The New Start Ministry (shelter for battered women), Crossroads Warsaw, Crossroads Mishawaka. (PAC)
- Fort Wayne First: Go Ministries with a focus on the homeless. (PAC)
- Fort Wayne Many Nations: Bridge of Grace Compassionate Ministry Center.
- Fort Wayne Trinity: The Gathering (a millennial group now ministering on the Purdue campus), and Garrett The Crossing (PAC).
- LaGrange New Vision a church plant with Toni James (CTM).
- Lynn: Hispanic Ministry, Lighthouse (supplies shoes, socks, and underwear to underprivileged children) (PAC), and counseling/ESL.
- Middletown: Celebrate Recovery (PAC).
- Muncie First: Hope Community, Shepherd Community, Hispanic School of Ministry (PAC).
- Muncie South Side: E/Gathering
- (Internet church), Liberty Village (nursing center), and Peace Crew (a motorcycle organization that helps support abused children.) (PAC)
- Muncie Restoration Community, a church plant with Mark & Stephanie Hendrickson (CTM).
- Ossian: Norwell Sports, Ossian Health Care (PAC).

- We congratulate Elkhart Northside Church under the leadership of Pastor Tim Sheets, for sponsoring the start of the Middlebury Community Church. It was organized October 21, 2018, under the leadership of Pastor Gary Sheets.
- We celebrate 945 individuals who came to know Jesus Christ as Savior. All Heaven is rejoicing!
- We celebrate 382 baptisms of those who declared their faith and surrender to God.
- 43 individuals responded with a “YES” to a call to ministry and received their local license.
- We celebrate the receipt of 340 new Nazarenes by Profession of Faith.
- We salute Elkhart Crossroads Community and Huntington First Church for their exemplary growth and one hundred years of faithfully proclaiming the gospel. This does not happen by accident. We are so proud of these two great churches.

Craig Groeschel warns, “Organizations don’t drift toward growth. They drift toward complacency and decline. If you are not intentionally preparing for growth you are unintentionally preparing for decline.” Not only does that apply to the local church but to the district as well.

- Pastor reports reflect 12,387 in total membership which is a significant loss of 788 due primarily to a number of churches that removed a total of 993 members from their rolls. With that in mind we actually increased by 205 members.
- Weekly worship attendance was down a little to 8,614.
- SDMI was also down to 8,005 a loss of 612.
- The Responsibility List increased by 2,677 to a total of 27,228.
- Income: Funds raised for all purposes was down a little to \$13,750,376.
- Debt on property was reduced by \$588,843 leaving a total property debt of \$6,048,078.
- Giving for Others:

WEF	\$710,497
P&B	\$273,169
ONU	\$265,793
District	\$559,918

MISSIONAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

[One Baptism / One New Nazarene / Increase in Worship Attendance / Funds Paid in Full]

EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP AWARD

[Increase in Responsibility List / One Conversion / One Baptism / One New Nazarene]

STEWARDSHIP AWARD

[ALL FUNDS PAID IN FULL]

Good News is meant to be shared! **[VIDEO]**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgMGnKOz4Z4>

Restoring the Missional Connection

Good News is meant to be shared! Our mission focus for the year 2020 is to spread the Good News; to recharge the church! Let's restore the missional connection, and through the power of the Holy Spirit fulfill God's purpose in reaching the unredeemed, the broken, and the discouraged.

Let's RESTORE THE CONNECTION!

John Maxwell observed that people are not looking to the church as much for truth as for relief. When something is broken, something is missing, when life is not satisfying, when a marriage is failing, the kids are wayward, and money is tight, they look to the church. They seek relief for things they cannot find or fix on their own.

C.S. Lewis said, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, He speaks to us in our conscience, but He shouts to us in our pain. Pain is His megaphone to awaken a deaf world."

People are looking to the church for relief from guilt, sin, and sorrow ... and we have Good News. God calls the church to daily connect to His charging station. When we are powered on, and prayed up, fear and doubt give way to a holy bold message of Jesus's love and righteousness.

It is only as we listen carefully to the Spirit of the Lord and respond in obedience to Him that our message of restoration is effective. God speaks! We have nothing to say if God does not speak. We join our brothers who prayed, "Silence in me any voice but Your own, that hearing I might also obey Your will through Jesus Christ my Savior."¹ "Pin my ear to the wisdom post that my mouth might be touched by the burning coals of God in order to speak what God desires me to speak."²

Jesus promised, *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses..."* (Acts 1:8).

When you were looking for relief who witnessed to you? How did you come to know Jesus as Lord? Many of you would probably say you were brought up in a Christian home. Maybe a caring family member bought you a Bible, shared the Good News, and lived an exemplary life before you, or a godly pastor or youth leader boldly proclaimed the Word and you received Christ. Some of you might have had a difficult childhood where even the thought of Christ was rejected. Then a friend invited you to a Bible study, VBS, church camp, or a revival service, and you were gloriously saved. Statisticians say that nearly 60% of all Christians were led to the Lord by a friend or family member. There are many examples of this throughout the scriptures.

John the Baptist told Andrew about Jesus. After he met the Lord, Andrew ran to get his brother Simon, eager for him to know the Messiah (John 1:41-42). Peter shared the gospel of salvation at the home of Cornelius and all his family and close friends believed. (Acts 10:24, 39-40, 44-48). Paul's ministry led him to Lydia's family and friends, and they were all baptized. (Acts 16:14-15). The Philippian jailer and his house believed because of Paul's miraculous message. (Acts 16:31-33). And one of the most remarkable salvation stories is that of the Ethiopian eunuch.

Philip, a layman, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom responded to God's voice to go to the desert road to Gaza. Even though it didn't make sense he obeyed the prompting of the Holy Spirit without reservation. He didn't question why he was being sent to the middle of nowhere. He didn't "decline the call" or press "remind me later." He just went!

¹ Luke A. Powery, January 18, 2015, Duke University Chapel

² James Weldon Johnson

A few weeks ago, I was listening to a sermon podcast by Pastor Terry Habegger when a technician entered my office for our regular pest control treatment. The gentleman just happened to hear Terry say that everyone was welcome to attend his church regardless of age, race, education, or economic status. The technician commented, "That's not true for all churches," and went on with his work. Before he left the building, he came back by my office and we engaged in further conversation. With tears he shared the painful news that his wife had connected with another man on the internet and was on her way to Texas to get him and bring him back to her home to live. He was heartbroken. At that moment it was obvious, this was a divine appointment. I had the wonderful privilege of praying with him and sharing the Good News.

On the desert road to Gaza, Philip had a divine encounter with an Ethiopian, an influential government official, who was just returning from Jerusalem. This wealthy man was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah when the Holy Spirit instructed Philip to walk along beside the chariot. When Philip drew close, he asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading. The eunuch replied, "How can I, unless someone teaches me?" and he invited Philip to sit with him in the chariot.

Philip made the connection! (Acts 8:35) He began with that same Isaiah passage and explained to him the Good News about Jesus. "All we like sheep have gone astray and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all...." Philip continued teaching him about the One who came and suffered on the cross, died as a sacrificial Lamb for all our sins, and was resurrected. The eunuch joyously accepted the Good News and received Christ as his Savior. He noticed some water nearby and said, "Why can't I be baptized?" They stopped the chariot and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. Tradition says that the eunuch joyously carried the gospel back home to Ethiopia where he founded the church and was influential in bringing countless others to Christ.

The Word of God, the Holy Spirit's leading, and an obedient witness, that's the power of restoring the connection!

Philip inspires us that we must be willing to "GO" whenever and wherever and to whomever the Spirit sends us. Every reference to Philip is one of his going. Going to the people in Jerusalem, going to the city of Samaria, going down the road to Gaza, going to the Eunuch, going to Azotus, and going to Caesarea.

Go and tell the Good News!

How many of you know of one person who is pre-Christian, not yet a believer? God loves those people who sit across the political aisle from you. God loves all those thousands of inmates in prison. God loves your ex-in-laws. God loves those addicts in your family who continue to wear you down. God loves those who work the streets and who work the clubs, and He loves the people that frequent those places. God loves those who cheat the system, who lie to advance themselves, and who frustrate you at the work place. I am not sure who your “those” are, but they are those people you would rather avoid altogether than to be asked to share your faith.

Brene’ Brown said, “We are those people. The truth is most of us are one paycheck, one divorce, one drug addicted kid, one mental health diagnosis, one sexual assault, one drinking binge, one affair away from being those people. --the ones we don't trust, the ones we pity, the ones we don't let our children play with, the ones bad things happen to, the ones we don't want living next door to us.”

When you think about those people, is there a deafening disconnect? The Lord urges us, “He who has ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” Rev. 2:29. “All we like sheep have gone astray but the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all....” Isaiah 53:6. God did not send His Son to condemn the world but in His great love He came to save us.

Think with me for a moment of a friend or family member that is not yet a believer? Think about that person for the next few moments and imagine yourself applying the ABC’s of witnessing.³

“A” is for ASK. Ask God for the timing and wisdom to witness to that person. As you observe their complicated lives ask God to give you a love and a burden that they might come to know Jesus as Lord.

“B” is for BELIEVE. Believe that God can overcome the darkness of sin. Nothing is impossible with God. In faith believe that your witness is going to have an effect and that God is using you to move that person one step closer to Christ!

“C” is for CONNECT! Think of other ways to connect, possibly over coffee or lunch, a ball game, or a neighborhood activity. Maybe they live a distance away so send a text, a phone call or Facetime. Ask them about their spiritual journey and share your faith background. When we are charged and challenged by the Holy Spirit, we can be certain that He will connect with them.

³ Erwin Lutzer, Moody Church, April 24, 2016

J.B. Chapman, former General Superintendent, preached a powerful message entitled, "All Out for Souls." Listen to his plea, "There is not enough heartbreak over the lost, not enough soul burden, not enough groaning and weeping and fasting and crying. Even more so there is not enough deep and genuine conviction for sin among the unsaved in our families and friends. 90% of all the battles in our churches would be cleared up if we focused on being ALL OUT FOR SOULS."

A couple of weeks ago I received a phone call from a Nazarene pastor in Tennessee. He asked if my parents ever pastored in Oklahoma and went on to share a most unusual connection. One of his good friends is a leader in the Assembly of God Church. While traveling through town he stopped to spend the night with them, and the conversation led to their faith journey. He went on to say that his friend's mother had a difficult home life. She was a troubled teenager seeking relief when a lady by the name of Pauline took a special interest in her. In fact, she led her into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and continued to mentor her throughout her adult life. That man expressed a debt of gratitude for one voice of faith that impacted their family for generations. He said, "I owe everything to that Nazarene pastor's wife who reached out to my mom 60 years ago. Do you happen to know Pauline Roland?" Yes, that woman, Pauline Roland, was my mother.

God is asking ... Can you hear Me? Can you hear Me now? Or are you suffering from low battery anxiety? There is a world of unredeemed, broken and discouraged folks that need to hear the Good News! We have a mission to recharge the church and restore connection with almighty God who hears our faintest cry and saves, heals and delivers for the glory of His Kingdom!

Respectfully Submitted,

David G. Roland