

**Eastern Michigan District
Church of the Nazarene
Report of the District Superintendent
April 26, 2006**

Dr. Nina and Dr. Moody Gunter, Dr. John Bowling, Rev. Wayne and Debbie Brown, Drs. John and Linda Seaman, Dr. Brian Allen, Dr. Laurel Matson, Dr. Steve Weber, Pastors, Associates, Evangelists, Delegates and guests of this 57th District Assembly of the Eastern Michigan District.

What a joy and privilege it is to bring my 29th report to the Eastern Michigan Assembly, 15 of those reports as a senior pastor and this my 14th report as your district superintendent. I remember as if it was yesterday standing before mostly strangers in 1977 as a 30 year old new pastor fresh out of Bible College to give that first report. Dr. George Coulter was the General Superintendent and I gave my 1 page double spaced report in I believe less than 60 seconds. In that report I shared an optimistic outlook for the future of my church. A church situated in the city of Detroit where everything socially and economically was in upheaval. Today, I come to bring this report not to strangers but to people that have become Marilyn and my dearest friends and are like family to us. Even though 29 years have passed, I come with the same optimism in 2006 that I had in 1977. It would be easy to look at the situation around us and say these are tough times to minister. But I look at all of the economic difficulties and social changes going on and I say there is no better time to minister.

Dr. Gunter, on behalf of the good people of the Eastern Michigan District, I want to welcome you and your husband Moody. I will never forget that historic moment in Indianapolis last June when you were elected to this office. The assembly arose in thunderous applause for you. But I believe the applause was for more than just you, I think it was also for the validation that you brought to the wonderful lady ministers across our denomination and the message is that the door is wide open to them for any position of service. We are honored to have you as our Jurisdictional General Superintendent for the next two years. I pledge to you my support and the support and prayers of this district as you carry out your responsibilities around the world. We covet your prayers for us as we carry the message of full salvation to the 5.7 million people of Eastern Michigan.

I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW!!!

Several months ago I underwent surgery for cataracts on both eyes. The change was immediate and significant. Everything was brighter and I could see little details I had been missing and didn't know it. Marilyn keeps a lovely house and I am only responsible to clean the small room near my home office where I get ready every morning. I thought I was doing a pretty good job until following my surgery I discover it wasn't as clean as I had thought. I gave it some much needed attention.

As I look around the district there are many things that sparkle with a new brilliance that I would like to draw attention to. First of all the district support staff is giving excellent and Godly leadership.

- Rev. Larry Betz has accepted the invitation to be my assistant. This was not an easy decision for him as he was experiencing great days as pastor of the Adrian First Church and had just received a wonderful renewal of his call. However, I am grateful for not only the knowledge he brings to the position, but also for his tremendous work ethic. He is highly respected across our district and is no stranger to the needs of our churches and pastoral staff. It's easy to see that Larry and Kathy love the Lord and it is a joy to work with them during these days.
- Mr. Andrew Frey began this past fall as our Office Administrator. Andrew's knowledge of the church as well as his administrative and computer abilities have been a God sent. He is efficient and effective as well as a pleasure to work with. He goes about his work as a ministry rather than just a job.
- Mrs. Cristy VanSteenburg is beginning her 4th year as our District Treasurer. Cristy is a valued ministry partner with a great understanding of not only financial matters but also the church. She is a graduate of Olivet and has earned her CPA. A stay at home mom to her two children, she willingly and effectively serves God in this important position.

- Rev. Dominic Pace, Rev. Jon Croft, Rev. Kendal Deford, Mr. Jerry Collins and Mrs. Lee Yarber are the dedicated employees responsible to help fulfill the mission of our District Campground. Our camp continues to be a shining light of ministry for the Eastern Michigan District. This year at the meeting of our Credentials Board, over 25 individuals testified to some significant spiritual or life event happening on the EMD Campground. This included finding Christ as Savior, being sanctified, called to ministry or even meeting their spouse at camp.
- The auxiliary directors of our district are to be commended for their continuing and oft times thankless work. Rev. Reta Steely, NMI President, Rev. Gary Slusher, Sunday School Chairman, and Rev. Jim Pope, NYI President are to be commended and thanked for all they due to advance the ministry in their respective areas across the Eastern Michigan District.
- Our District Advisory Board has spent many hours and late nights wrestling with issues that have presented themselves. These 12 individuals are not only great churchmen but are leaders in their communities around our district. Thank you to Rev. Fred Hall, Rev. Ron Blake, Rev. Tim Gocha, Rev. Chet Decker, Rev. Darrel Harvey, Rev. Glen Gardner, Dr. John Dickey, Gordon Horton, Arlene Chenoweth, Mark Pennington, Eric Chenoweth, and Ron Sharpe. It is with regret that I inform you that Dr. Dickey has requested that his name not be left in nomination for the Advisory Board this year. After asking him to take time to pray and reconsider his decision, Dr. Dickey has received confirmation from God that it is time for him to step aside from this board. Dr. Dickey has served God and the Eastern Michigan District faithfully for 35 years. Elected in 1971 under the leadership of Dr. E.W. Martin, Dr. Dickey has been a friend, confidant, and advisor to 4 district superintendents. His wisdom and insight into matters has greatly helped advance the work of Christ in our 13 counties. His financial insights have helped put EMD on strong footing. His understanding of legal matters has helped us navigate through some very touchy issues. Every minister can testify of his great medical care for the shepherds of EMD. The only Advisory Board meeting he ever missed during those 35 years was when I threaten to cancel the meeting if he showed up. He was in Toronto for a Medical Convention where he was receiving an award. He planned to drive back to Fenton for the meeting and then later that night return to Toronto. Personally, I could not have asked for a better friend. I have watched him live his life for Christ and the church. He has never disappointed me and I'm sure never disappointed God. I have learned Godliness and graciousness as well as generosity from him. I have watched his children move into adulthood and take places of responsibility in their church and now his grandchildren are all following the same path of the Christ centered life. This is no accident, but has happened because of the great example they have had in their father and grandfather Dr. Dickey. Dr. Dickey you are loved and will be missed on this board. On behalf of your grateful district, thank you for serving so faithfully. We are better people and a better district because of you. Would you welcome with me Dr. Dickey as he comes to the platform.
- Rev. Gregg Davis and Rev. Don Ault along with their teaching staff continue to offer excellent leadership to our Eastern Michigan District Nazarene Bible College Institute. Sixty five individuals are enrolled and preparing for ministry through classes that are offered. These classes meet weekly at the District Office, Flint First Church and Detroit First Church. It is obvious that those enrolled are receiving a quality education and superior preparation for ministry both theologically and practically. I want to commend the staff for their excellent teaching in the Doctrine of Holiness. Every candidate that has met with our Ministerial Credentials Board from EMDNBI has been able to articulate the the meaning of a second work of grace, entire sanctification, in the life of the believer. More importantly they have been able to testify to their own personal experience in this regard.
- Mrs. Barb Burdine, director of the Eastside Mission in Flint, is to be commended for her leadership in being the hands and feet of Jesus to this needy community. She along with her volunteer staff prepare thousands of meals, distributes tons of food, sort mountains of donated clothing, and give away through the Baby House, formula, diapers, toys, and supplies to single and married moms that have no other means of the community. I want to encourage every member of our district to partner with the Mission in giving a generous financial gift and volunteering your time to help. Today's lunch is

being prepared and served by Barb and her crew at no charge. An offering will be taken to not only defray the expenses but to help the Mission. The outstanding debt on their facilities including the new Baby House Ministry Building is less than \$60,000. What a blessing it would be for the mission if an individual or a church would liquidate this debt for them.

- The same day that our country said farewell to Rosa Parks, a leader in the civil rights movement, our church said farewell to one of our great leaders, Rev. Warren Rogers. Rev. Rogers made his home during his final days in the Detroit area and was a member of our district. It was my privilege to work with Rev. Rogers on many occasions but particularly in 1979 when he and his wife Lillian came to Detroit to hold a several week crusade to help establish the new Detroit Grace Church along with their new pastor Rev. Robert Hunter. I never will forget them singing their theme song, "Everything Living Needs Love". Thank you Rev Rogers for your great service to Christ and the church.

I CAN SEE THIS PAST YEAR CLEARLY

The 2005-6 assembly year has proven to be another year of growth for the district. Particularly encouraging is the number of new Nazarenes and the growing Morning Worship average. Disappointing is our continuing slide in Sunday School and evening worship attendance.

The record indicates the following:

	<u>2004-5</u>	<u>2005-6</u>	<u>+Increase/-Decrease</u>
Membership	11,794	11,990	+ 196
New Nazarenes	438	538	+ 100
Sunday School Enrollment	14,903	15,199	+ 296
Sunday School Attendance	6,836	6,548	- 288
AM Worship	11,945	12,464	+ 519
PM Worship	3,558	3,202	- 356
Raised for All Purposes	\$14,921,166*	\$19,169,339	+ \$4,248,173
Indebtedness (Churches)	\$20,413,810	\$19,399,118	- \$1,014,692
Property Values	\$114,055,500	\$123,484,100	+ \$9,428,600

*** 9 Month Year**

I commend the 51 churches that paid their Ministry Fund obligations in full and 36 churches attained 10% giving status for World Evangelism. This was not an easy task but with good leadership on the part of pastors and NMI presidents along with sacrificial giving of the people, their Ministry Funds have been paid in full. This year, as a district, we did not do as well as we could have on payment of our budgets. It is easy to blame a lot of outside factors that we have little control over for these being lower. However we must not give in to the temptation of making excuses of a poor economy, high health care costs and fuel prices. The work of Christ has always involved faith combined with sacrifice. I am just old fashioned enough to believe that God blesses those individuals and churches that give to others. This year I will be meeting with every board of the churches that failed to meet 100% of their Ministry Fund Payments to assist them and the pastor to devise a plan for success. I encourage every church to begin paying on these ministry funds now so you don't have to play catch up when the year is half over. The latest figures we have on these funds are:

	<u>Assessed</u>	<u>\$ Paid</u>	<u>% Paid</u>	<u>Balance</u>
World Evangelism Fund	1,231,588.	1,073,517	87.17 %	158,071.
Pensions & Benefits	328,618.	306,323.	93.22 %	22,295.
Educational	597,136.	508,093.	85.08 %	101,887.
District	609,233.	537,052.	88.15 %	84,986.

This week our District Advisory Board voted unanimously to take money out of our Nazarene Foundation account to pay any remaining balance on the Pensions Budget so that we can be 100% paid. These funds are not coming from budget dollars but from money given to our foundation. Because of the boards concern for our ministers and their generosity, every credentialed senior pastor and full time credentialed associate that is covered by the Group Term Life Insurance program from the Department of Pensions and Benefits, USA will receive the bonus coverage for 100% payment. This could amount to as

much as \$45,000. in additional coverage depending upon the age of the minister. In addition, those covered by the Tax Sheltered Annuity Plan will receive the bonus of \$500. being contributed to their account.

On August 29, 2005 at approximately 10 AM, Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi. For hours the 140 mile an hour winds pounded the area. In the aftermath it seemed as if the Federal Government was handcuffed and unable to decide what to do. Immediately churches around the country sprung into action sending relief supplies and work teams to the devastated areas. The Church of the Nazarene led the way in sending the coveted Crisis Care Kits, money, and work teams. Our district led the way by sending a semi load of Crisis Care Kits and other supplies right into the center of the worst hit areas. Immediately plans were being laid to help rebuild churches and homes in both New Orleans and Gulfport. Dr. David Bowser and the West Flint Church headed up the efforts to rebuild New Orleans First Church. Rev. Chet Decker of the Warren Woods Church organized our efforts to minister to the needs of Gulfport. Hundreds of individuals spent vacation time to travel to the Gulf region to restore and rebuild and tens of thousands of dollars were given to purchase supplies and help the hurting. I don't know that I've ever been prouder of the people of Eastern Michigan than I have been through this tragedy. My friend Rev. Greg Mason, the District Superintendent of both of these districts has sent a video greeting to our assembly.

A little over 2 years ago, one our own Eastern Michigan ministers accepted the call to pastor New Orleans First Church. Rev. Larry Bolling served as an associate pastor at Detroit Grace Church under the leadership of Rev. Robert Hunter for many years. He was called to the ministry on the EMD, he prepared himself through our EMDNBI program and was ordained here in 2003. Little did he know that his move would place him right in the eye of the storm. I have invited Rev. Bolling to our assembly today to bring greetings. Would you welcome home, Rev. Larry and De Bolling.

A special thanks to Dr. Bowser and Rev. Decker who headed up our efforts as well as Nathan Salo who was our on site coordinator in Gulfport and Rev. Ben Walls and the people of Brighton Church who did the work and paid for materials to restore several houses. Your efforts have not gone un-noticed by your district and I'm sure by the Savior.

I CAN SEE THE FUTURE CLEARLY

As we stand on the verge of the 100th Anniversary of our beloved church, I want us to rekindle the pioneer spirit of our early leaders. You see those men and women of another century embarked on the task of spreading the Word of God across this new country. There were very few of them and even less resources. Yet they had a burning desire to see men and women, teens, and boys and girls find Christ as Savior and Sanctifier of their lives. They preached with passion and served with excitement. They didn't have any pension plan except the one that was laid up for them in glory. They made due with what they had and gave God thanks for it. Therefore I would like to propose that as we approach our centennial celebration and set our sights on the following:

100 Year Anniversary Goals

- **100% GROWTH IN NEW MEMBERSHIP** – That a strong emphasis be placed on receiving members by profession of faith. 28 of our churches did not receive one new member by profession of faith. Every minister must win people to Christ and bring them into membership in the church or frankly they aren't getting the job done and the church may have lost their reason to exist. I am challenging us to win people to Christ and disciple them in the faith and bring them into membership. If we could turn our 538 new Nazarenes into 100 percent growth over a two year period, this would increase our membership from just under 12,000 to well over 13,500.
- **100 SEEDS OF FAITH** – One of the joys I have of serving on Eastern Michigan is the privilege of working beside two extraordinary District Superintendents. Dr. John Seaman and Rev. Wayne Brown serve the Michigan and Northern Michigan Districts with great distinction. It has been our privilege to partner particularly with the Northern Michigan District in the establishing of 2 new churches in Petoskey and Glenn Lake. Both of these works are reaching people for Christ. Recently at a meeting of the combined New Start Boards for all three districts, the Lord laid upon the hearts of the DSs to

make a concerted effort to reach the various people groups of Michigan with the Gospel of Christ. We therefore are proposing that in Michigan we want to have 100 new ministries established to help celebrate our 100th anniversary. These may be New Start Churches but they also may take different forms. They might include a home Bible study in a community that does not have a Nazarene Church. It could be an ethnic emphasis within your own church, a campus ministry on one of our many State Colleges and Universities, or even starting another service on a day or time when those hindered from coming to the normal Sunday services is impossible. In reaching our Michigan Goal of 100 Seeds of Faith we realize probably all of them will not develop into New Start Churches, but what if 10 or 20 of them do? It's planting season once again and I am challenging our Eastern Michigan pastors and churches to embrace at least 50% of this goal seeing as we have over 50% of the population of the state living in our 13 counties. Every pastor must have his eyes open for opportunities to minister in new ways. Be bold, don't be afraid to fail. Do something that will stretch you and your people but will pay off in people in the Kingdom. Our goal is not just numbers but it is souls and the last time I checked you can count souls.

- **100 INDIVIDUALS ANSWERING THE CALL TO MINISTRY** – Tonight we will be issuing over 20 new first time Ministers Licenses. If we are going to staff the growing churches and New Starts, it is going to require a concerted effort on behalf of all of our churches to help men and women and our young people to identify and answer their call to ministry. In addition, many people are receiving buyouts from their employers and I believe they would be willing to invest 10 to 20 years of their life in ministry for Christ. Jesus said: “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”
Luke 10:2 NIV
- **100 % PAYMENT OF MINISTRY FUNDS** – I remember well coming back to my church board from my first District Assembly with my budgets in hand. They totaled \$6,286 which was about 20% of our \$36,000 income the previous year. When I presented them to the board, one member exclaimed “How do they expect us to ever pay that much?” Without thinking I replied, “Well, with that attitude we never will pay them”. Little did I know then that I had hit the nail on the head – it has everything to do with **ATTITUDE**. We can go away from this assembly saying we can't – or we can go away saying with God's help we can. I want to be associated with the shepherd boy who saw a giant and said “He's so big I can't miss him” rather than with the mighty army that coward in fear saying “He's too big we can't defeat him.” My hat is off to our Northern Michigan neighbors who have thirty four churches, 26 of which are less than 100 in Sunday morning attendance, their total district income is less than two of our largest churches. The economy in Northern Michigan makes ours look like boom times, a majority of their pastors are bi-vocational and yet they are about to celebrate their 20 year anniversary with 18 of those years having the World Evangelism Fund paid in full and the last 6 years 100% of every budget has been paid in full. If they can do it so can we. Dr. Gunter, I pledge to you that next year the record I will be better and that our centennial year will be perfect across the board.
- **\$100,000. TO BE GIVEN FOR A NEW GLOBAL MINISTRY CENTER** - (Show Video) I am proposing that a 100% of our churches of Eastern Michigan either build into their budget or receive an offering in support of our new Global Ministry Center. I believe that Eastern Michigan Nazarenes will give generously and the total should equal or exceed \$100,000. In honor of our 57th anniversary I have proposed to the District Advisory Board and they have unanimously supported taking money earned from our Nazarene Foundation to get us more than half way to our goal. Dr. Gunter it is my privilege to present you with a check today in the amount of \$57,000., a thousand dollars for each year of our existence.
- **100% PARTICIPATION IN THE OLIVET NAZARENE UNIVERSITY CHAPEL CONSTRUCTION CAMPAIGN** – Less than a year ago, we received a scare when our president, Dr. John Bowling was elected to the office of General Superintendent. He was an excellent choice and would have done an outstanding job. Following a time of prayer, he declined the election in order

to continue his responsibilities at Olivet. We have grown to trust Dr. Bowling's visionary leadership. In the next several months he will be proposing a new chapel for the campus. This will be a state of the art facility which will allow all ONU students to attend services at the same time. Currently they meet on split shifts during the week. This chapel will serve our campus long into the future. Please begin to pray and plan now about how your church can be involved.

- **LOOKING TO 100 YEARS OF MINISTRY FOR OUR CAMPGROUND**– This year our camp will celebrate 50 years since it was purchased and developed under the leadership of District Superintendent Dr. W.M. McGuire. The vision our early leaders had for a strong Campmeeting has benefited us and it continues to grow in attendance and effectiveness. It is incumbent upon us to continue to upgrade our camp facilities to insure that a strong holiness message goes forth for the next 50 years. Therefore, I am pleased to announce that plans are underway to do the following:
 - Air Condition the Tabernacle. Engineering is almost completed and soon this project will go out for bids. Our hope is the work will be complete so we can enjoy it for this year's Campmeeting. The dates are July 23-30 and our evangelists are Dr. James Mellish and Rev. Jimmy Dell. The Bible will be Rev. Claude Nicholas and our song evangelist is Mr. Brian Arner.
 - Addition of over 100 new camping sites. These would be located adjacent to our existing lots and continue around the lake.
 - Installation of a central waste treatment facility. While this is not a glorious project, it will allow us to do some much needed expansion and insure the health of our campers and residents for years to come.
 - Presently, negotiations are ongoing to purchase a multi acre piece of land on the opposite side of Sandy Bottom Lake from our property. If we can acquire this parcel, we will help insure the continued safety of our campground and have adequate room for future expansion.

These goals are ambitious but they are attainable if we ban together, trust God and work hard. We must rekindle the pioneer spirit that looks at opportunities and possibilities and not just the obstacles. Jesus took the few loaves and fishes that a little boy had brought for his own lunch and turned it into a banquet for the multitude on the hillside. All the disciples could see was a small lunch and they remarked; "...but what are they among so many? ". The fact is we don't have all the resources we need to accomplish God's ambitious plan, but we can and should have enough faith to see it come to fruition.

In a few moments you will be casting a vote to decide whether to renew my call for the next four years. I want there to be no mistake about my vision for the Eastern Michigan District. I see clearly what I believe God wants us to accomplish and He is expecting us to do. It involves strategizing to reach the diverse people groups that call Eastern Michigan home. But it also involves partnering with our worldwide church in spreading the gospel to every corner of the globe and includes our Camp, as well as our beloved University. We must join hands, hearts and pocketbooks in a great effort to reach these Centennial Goals. The Lord is depending upon us. We must begin on our knees and stay on our knees to see these things accomplished. One hundred years from now, our successors will know little about us or what we discussed here today, but I want them to know that the Nazarenes of the church's centennial were people of faith, prayer, and sacrifice. They had a great desire and commitment to reach their world and the world that is coming. Folks, we are not a generic church, we are a Holiness Church. We have the message of Freedom from Sin and of the Spirit Filled life. Let's live and preach it so the world will see it and desire what we have.

Dr. Gunter, I want to assure you and this assembly that I love God with all of my heart and am committed to building the Kingdom through the efforts of the Eastern Michigan District. I'm not as young as I was 14 years ago, but I'm just as committed and energized. I also want you to know that I love my wonderful wife Marilyn and she is a partner in ministry as well as the most beautiful lady on the district. We have the privilege of having 5 generations of our family within 25 mile of our home in Fenton. In ministry it doesn't get any better than this. But the best part is that we get to serve with the finest people in the denomination, the ministers and laymen of the Eastern Michigan District.

My friend the late Dr. Earl Lee used to sing a little song and he would say: “Has anybody told you they love you today?” he would repeat it several times and end the little jingle by saying “I love you”. Eastern Michigan, Marilyn and I love you.

Respectfully Submitted
Stephen T. Anthony
District Superintendent