

## District Superintendent's Report 58<sup>th</sup> District Assembly – May 30, 2008

Last year's theme: "Out of our Seats and into the Streets"

This year we add: ". . . to bring people to Jesus."

Dr. Middendorf, our people and I want to let you in on a little secret, and this is it: You are in Alaska, the most beautiful state in all God's creation. It's a place where the mournful cry of a loon confirms, "wilderness"; a place where calving glaciers sound like thunder as a million pounds of blue ice crash into our pristine waters.

Where else can you count wild moose on your drive to church? Where else can the view of mountain vistas fill areas bigger than most states? Where else can you encounter grandeur that's so spectacular that you almost grow accustomed to the extraordinary? A lot of people think we must be a tad strange to live in our remote, frozen north, but we consider ourselves pioneers who wouldn't want to live any place else.

This place is called Alaska; we call it home. And as we gather today to launch our denominational Centennial Celebration, 100 years of Holiness Evangelism, we, the Alaskan's DS, pastors and people want to renew our passion to win people to Christ. The vastness & grandeur of our state cannot overshadow the emptiness of people lost without Christ.

We commit ourselves today to reignite our hearts with a flame of Holy Love with one goal in mind. As John Wesley instructed his pastors, "**WE HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT SAVE SOULS.**"

For us, numbers are a factual accountability report. You can't navigate the ship without continually reading the numbers and charting the course. Neglect of statistics is comparable to not caring whether Christ's Church lives or dies. We care deeply about our churches, so yes, we all care about numbers. They tell us where we are and what's happening in our churches. They are assessment tools that express exactly our current situation. They are not the whole story, for God alone knows how many countless miracles our churches have been a part of because of caring pastors & people. And numbers don't tell us how many left our church community because of personal or economic reasons. Yet numbers are the measurable values we use in order to evaluate our evangelistic, discipleship efforts.

As we look over these numbers of the last five years, we get a clear picture of our leadership effectiveness. Let us look closely at these numbers. They cause us to be objective. No cheerleading or positive rhetoric can supersede these facts.

So, let's pause today to review how we have done since Nov, 2003.

Statistics	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average
Membership	1971	2002	2001	2004	1966	1989
SS Attendance	1285	1269	1178	1325	1343	1280
AM Worship	1712	1677	1663	1724	1701	1695
New Nazarenes	97	111	76	85	145	105
Money Raised	\$2,855,595	\$4,312,975*	\$3,434,953	\$3,449,143	\$3,621,716	\$3,534,876
Number of Churches	24		26			3 New-Starts

\* District Record

As your DS, I rejoice over our gains but I want more, much more, and so do all of you. And the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the One who is able to do immeasurably more.

**MORE** than all we ask

**MORE** than all we imagine

**ACCORDING** to **HIS POWER** that is so mightily at work within us.

My dear people, let us carefully consider how we are doing in this business of saving people. I want to affirm to you that this is a “we” question. As your District Superintendent I assume my own responsibility and accountability to God, our General Church, and our beloved communities as well. Not only are you and I responsible, but we are privileged to be called to share in building God’s kingdom community in Alaska.

This task calls for **FOCUSED**, **DECISIVE** and **DYNAMIC** leadership.

1. **FOCUSED LEADERSHIP** is singular – we must **save people** (essential priority)
2. **DECISIVE LEADERSHIP** – we must separate **the essentials from the non-essentials** – what are we currently doing or need to be doing to save people? Everything that keeps us busy but not productive needs to be put under the microscope & if it’s not essential, cut off. Busy-ness must be replaced by productivity. We must become focused on the essence (saving people).
3. **DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP** – we must burn with a passion to **save people**. Business as usual is laze’ fair, but a person aflame with the power of the Holy Spirit is the kindling needed to start a fire of Holy Love for the lost.

Now let me highlight this past year & challenge us as we enter into our Centennial Celebration. Three past emphases deserve recognition, and reflect our stated Missional Values:

1. **PASSIONATE PASTORS** – after District Assembly 2007, Dr. Chic Shaver, Nancy, Linda & I hit the roads, airports & ferries and we toured the entire District with a Witnessing Without Fear Seminar. Dr. Shaver was tireless and he poured out copious

amounts of energy. He told me that every District where he had held these workshops, the next year the entire District reported more new members received by profession of faith than the year before. Not only did he get it right again, but this is the largest number of new members we've received in my tenure as DS. I rejoice that the workshop with Dr. Shaver was productive and pastors & laity responded to God's call to be bold witnesses. Leadership is the vital difference. Pastors, your passion is reflected in our best year yet of saving people. Thank you.

2. **PASSIONATE PRAYER** – During our fall Pastor & Spouse's Retreat and again in our CEU training in February, our focus was directed at awakening ourselves & our churches to a new spiritual vitality through the supernatural power that comes by passionate prayer.

But prayer cannot become an emphasis for one year, this must become a part of our DNA. Our ability to save people will be in direct proportion to the amount of passionate, intercessory prayer we bring before the Throne of Grace.

I want to encourage every church & pastor to make prayer a priority again this year. Some of you could set up twenty-four hour houses of prayer in your church & community. Others could establish small groups with prayer as their intentional focus; several churches could start the **3-5 Program**:

- 1) pray for 5 unsaved people
- 2) for 5 weeks
- 3) for 5 minutes a day.

I'm convinced that the prophetic voice of God is calling His people back to intercessory prayer.

3. **PLANTING CHURCHES** – Last year Pastor Mike Rochin planted Renew Community Fellowship out of our New Hope Compassionate Ministries. Two years ago, Pastor Paul Trissel heard God speak to him at District Assembly about planting a church. Today West Valley Family is one of the fastest growing churches on our District. We must plant one new church every year, including this year.

Again, our Missional Core Values:

Passionate Pastors – **Leadership** is a key to **vital churches**

Powerful Prayer – **Prayer** is a key to **productive churches**

Planting Churches – **Planting churches** is the key to **expand God's kingdom in Alaska**

Church Planting, Possible Locales:

Anchorage Bowl

Juneau

Mat-Su Valley

Kenai

Fairbanks

## OUR FUTURE

There is no need to ask our pastors & people to do anything different. For if our ministry is to save people, then what we need is a heightened continuation of what we started last year. We need:

- Passionate Pastors
- Powerful Prayer
- Planting Churches

I'm asking every pastor & lay leader to take these Values home with you. Meet with your boards, your leadership, your church and ask them all what can you do to make these values your practice? I'm asking you to help us plant more churches; it will be the greatest soul-winning ministry you've ever participated in. I will team with a church who will take an associate Pastor for 18 months, with the clear understanding that the associate will plant a church after that timeframe. To qualify, you must have paid 100% of your funds, District and General.

Now let's look at the churches on our District that had an outstanding year. The following churches and their pastor won the ALASKA AWARD. As I call your name would the Pastor or a lay leader come & stand on the platform with me. These churches increased their morning worship by 5% over last year's average.

1. Nome
2. Chinese Gospel
3. Anchorage First Samoan
4. West Valley Family
5. Fairbanks First
6. Juneau
7. Nikiski
8. Valdez

THE EAGLE AWARD – This award goes to the churches that had an outstanding year in all categories.

- Juneau – Pastor Gene Rosebecke
- West Valley Family – Pastor Paul Trissel
- Nome – Pastor Jeran Marchbanks

I rejoice with these 8 churches and these pastors for their labors for Christ.

## APPRECIATION

I truly love all the pastors & laity that comprise our District. Your sacrificial giving to expand God's kingdom through finances, time, behind the scenes service, giving cups of cold water in Jesus' name are deeply appreciated by me. Thank you.

I wish to thank the following individuals:

### PASTOR BRUCE HARDESTY

Pastor Bruce is stepping down as District SDMI Director this year. He has given positive & competent leadership these past several years. Thank you, Pastor Bruce for your faithfulness & for a job well done.

### KATHY WIGGINTON

Kathy expresses her love & passion as NMI President. She keeps world missions at the forefront & heartbeat of our District, which is where it belongs.

### CHRIS SCOTT

Chris leads New Hope on the Last Frontier. Her job is monumental. There could never be enough hands & feet, heads & hearts to lead our compassionate ministry, but with God's help Chris gives Him her all. Thank you, Chris.

### DENNIS LINNELL

The consummate NYI President and one of the greatest laymen I've ever known. Dennis, thank you for loving our teens.

### COLLEEN PALMER – District Treasurer

I could not ask for a kinder, more cooperative person to work with. Her competence & financial responsibility assure me that our financial viability is in great hands. Thank you.

### MICKY BOYER

A good friend, super District Secretary, and fine Pastor. Thank you, Pastor Micky, for your labors of love.

### DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD

Weldon Shuman, Blair Rorabaugh, Paul Hartley, Dick Smith, Terry Wallace, Dennis Strait: Six men who care about this District and are willing to give of their time & wisdom. Thank you.

### TERRY & BECKY LIVENGOOD

Two outstanding people, doing an outstanding job.

### KARMELLE DEILE

I'm losing my personal secretary this year to a joyous occasion, the birth of her first child. Karmelle is loved across our District by Pastors & laymen for her kindness & helpfulness. She will be missed by me. She is a lady of grace and love, and her professionalism will be hard to replace. We rejoice with you, Karmelle, and want you to know how deeply appreciated you are.

### ANDY HEER

It seems as if most District events are held here at Jewel Lake Church. Andy never complains. His servanthood nature makes him a joy to be around. Andy, thank you & your church for being such fabulous hosts.

### LINDA COUCH

Mrs. Couch is outside today waiting for the birth of a new grandson. Everyone that knows us at all realizes what a special lady we have in Linda for a DS's wife. Next to Christ, Linda has been the most powerful influence in my life. After 41 years of marriage I'm more grateful to be married to this beautiful woman than ever. Her beauty is not skin deep, it reverberates from the core of her heart. Lord, I'm thankful.

### MY LEADERSHIP & GENERAL CHURCH

I'm grateful to the Church of the Nazarene and its leaders for allowing me to serve Christ through our denomination.

I want to thank our Pastors & People for extending more grace than I deserve.

### FINALLY, MY LORD

My Lord Jesus recognized a desperate, despairing and potentially destructive young man of twenty-three. He extended grace and mercy in a moment that revolutionized my life forever. I've never been the same since that day and never wanted anything but more of what He had to give. Lord, I'm a product of Your amazing love. Once again, I offer You my little all in return for Your infinite all. Thank you, Lord.

Missionally,  
Michael R. Couch  
District Superintendent