

District Superintendent's Report Metro New York District, May 10, 2019

Grace and peace brothers and sisters. It is my privilege to welcome you all to this the 112th Assembly of the Metro New York District Church of the Nazarene. It is good for the family to get together. I would like to welcome specially Dr. David Basic and his wife Christi, their presence on our district as the General Superintendent in jurisdiction has been an unqualified positive addition to our ministry in this district. I believe it is particularly providential for me that in this my first year as District Superintendent he has been here to encourage and to support me in this new and critically important assignment that the Lord has called me to at this time in my life. Thank you my friend Dr. Basic.

In this report I want you to think with me about four fundamental questions, questions that we must all ask ourselves and answer as honestly as possible. Firstly, the question of Identity -who are we as Nazarenes? Secondly, the question of Mission - why are we here at this time and in this place? Thirdly the question of Destination - where are we going? And Fourthly, the question of strategy - how are we going to get there?

Who Are We? The Issue of Identity

The issue of a clear and coherent theological identity is stated as a vital concern of the leaders of our church at the national level. We assert that we are the custodians of the Wesleyan - Holiness tradition and that means something. Albert C Outler, the 20th century Wesleyan scholar, helps us to identify four important features of this Wesleyan heritage which we value and steward. they are; a commitment to scripture, a respect and regard for historic Christian tradition, the importance of reason and the validity and value of personal experience.

If our Identity is that we are a people formed and informed by holy Scripture, rooted in sacred tradition, enlightened by sanctified reason and experiencing God's transforming presence, the question is why are we here in this time and in this place - what's our mission?

Why Are We Here? The Issue of Mission

The words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are critically instructive for us, who take our fundamental identity and direction from scripture:

“You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt 5:14a,16).

The Apostle Peter resonates with this idea in 1Peter 2:9 when he writes:

'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. '

I have concluded from my reading of scriptures, that our mission as Metro New York District Nazarenes is to be a conspicuous presence in the world for good, so that the world's attention would be drawn to the God whose people we are. When the world sees the goodness and greatness of our God in what He has done for us, in what He has done in us and in what He is doing through us they will come to know Him and inevitably come to “glorify” him. We therefore are here with the mission of being the critical agents in the plan for God's redemptive revelation of Himself to this strategic population in this part of the world at this time. A population that is truly a microcosm of the world that through its direct relations with its several places of origin reaches to every country everywhere, indeed to “the uttermost parts of the world”.

We are here in our 123 local churches in the various corners of this district so that the presence of God may radiate as “points of light” in every one of these locations regardless of the prevailing “darkness”. When the people called Nazarenes form communities of worship and service, they do so in order to bear witnesses through word and deed of God's transforming grace. We are agents of the “Kingdom of Light”, we are being transformed by the presence of Christ in our midst and we are here to bring transformation in His name and by His power to individuals, families and communities - “before whom we shine as lights”. You can tell I embrace the encouragement of the Apostle Paul as he writes from prison to the Philippians in chapter 2:12-16:

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. '

Where Are We Going? The Issue of Destination

The OMR method of planning has been useful to me. So instead of stating the preferred future of a plan as a “goal” I choose to state it as an OUTCOME - that to me treats it as a reality not merely a speculative wish. That then is the “O” in the acronym. I then ask, “What METHOD (strategy) will I need to employ in order to have that outcome? I then seek to determine “What RESOURCES need to be in place if I’m employing the chosen method in order to arrive at the desired outcome?” This is how we will speak about the destination - what I see as the desired outcome. “What then do we see as the preferred future for the Metro New York District of the Church of the Nazarene?” Put another way, “What are the concrete outcomes that we will see if we are being true to our mission, our reason for being here? Where are we going?”

First: Efficient Communication

I envision every Nazarene Church on the Metro New York District, every Pastor and every lay person in those churches being comfortably conversant with and whole heartedly committed to our Mission as agents of “light”. I see us having this Missional Clarity and Commitment because we are unapologetically making systemic effective Communication among ourselves and to our contemporary context a district priority. I see us intentionally embracing, accessing and employing the best available technology, the most professional marketing campaigns and the finest creative branding ideas so that our “light shines brightly”. Jesus points out that lights are placed in the most effective position so as to function well.

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

With effective communication, our message will be consistent, clear, appealing, and acceptable. Let us note here that the New York metropolitan area which is at the heart of our district is arguably the most sophisticated communication hub in the world today. This is where God has placed us at this time. I see us then, as Gods people - His agents of light, representing our hope filled message so well that its life transforming power which we as Wesleyan Holiness people claim to have experienced ourselves, will be unleashed to saving effect to the millions around us and then to those to whom we are connected – to the “ends of the earth” .

Second: Effective Pastoral Leadership

John C Maxwell is quoted as saying “Everything rises and falls with leadership”. The quality of the leadership of our Pastors is vital to the success of the mission. The preferred future of our district is one in which Pastors who lead our congregation are “known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom”, essential criteria required for leadership in the Church in Acts chapter 6. Of course, this wisdom is not merely “intellectual smartness” or even theological astuteness, but instead the wisdom that the Apostle James contrasts with that kind of wisdom. James notes:

‘But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.’ James 3:17

I envisage in our preferred future, Competent, Courageous and Compassionate Pastoral leaders in all our churches who depend on the Holy Spirit to give them the Charismatic gift of the ability to lead well. However, I also see these gifted people not operating like “Lone Rangers” but displaying humility and responsibility in embracing the concept of working together with other pastors on our district as a team. I see us enthusiastically sharing methods, insights, and resources with one another and being open to be supported by district programing designed to make us better individuals, better Christians and better leaders.

Third: Optimal Pastoral Wellness

If Pastors are not healthy in a wholistic way they cannot lead well and the important mission we have is at risk of being compromised and even to be completely subverted. If however, we are true to our mission as a district one concrete outcome that is clear to me is that there will necessarily be an ongoing practical and effective program of Pastoral wellness. I see this as being focused on the Pastor's family life and its welfare along with the Pastor's wholistic health - economic, mental and emotional, physical and spiritual.

Fourth: Full Engagement of the Laity

Pastors come and go to the local church. The health of the local church cannot then be solely dependent on Pastoral leadership as important as this is. The organizational development, leadership development and spiritual maturity of lay people in the local church is a priority for church health. This is consistent with scripture which says in Ephesians 4:11-16:

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

We know we are truly faithful to our mission when the outcome is that local churches in this district have effective, fully informed, committed and competent lay people. These lay people will take their various places in our local churches and importantly they will get elected to their boards too! We see in our preferred future, such board members as lay people who understand and embrace our Wesleyan Holiness spirituality. And we see these local church boards as being committed to ensuring that the reputation, integrity, business ethics, congregational harmony and spiritual fervor of the local church reflects the “shining light” of Christian witness in the

community in which the church is located. I envision the district actively engaged with the local church in leadership training for the laity helping to make this vision of an engaged laity a reality.

Fifth: Intentional Next Generational Engagement

One of the most ominous specters in Scripture is the tragedy of the idolatry of the post Joshua generation.

The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel. '

Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten...After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals...They were in great distress. Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors, who had been obedient to the Lord 's commands. Judges 2:7-17

The lesson learnt from scripture is that the experience of God, regardless how powerful and transformative in one generation, does not automatically transfer to the next. The transfer has to be systematically and intentionally undertaken. When the mission is being prosecuted in the Metro NY district the outcome we will see is that there is an intentional and comprehensive program of engagement of the next generation. This will be a priority focus of a district determined not to lose its offspring and their friends to a secular, neo-pagan culture. I envision an all-out effort to understand the existential questions of our children, youth and young adults and to adjust church attitudes and activities. With the next generation in mind we will present answers rooted in scripture but presented in a way that is sensitive, relevant and authentic. Our ministries that are youth and young adult focused, will be more concerned about “being” than about “saying”, concentrating more on compassionate action more than on philosophical rhetoric.

Sixth: Compassionate Community Involvement and Immigration Services

Jesus teaches that shining the light in a dark world is inseparable from doing “good deeds”.

‘... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. 'Matthew 5:16

Scripture makes it clear in what has been called the “Micah Mandate” that as far as God is concerned compassionate engagement takes priority over lavish liturgical activity. The prophet Micah writes:

'With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. '(Micah 6:6-8)

Ministry among the disadvantaged and marginalized is in the DNA of the people called Nazarenes. It was in fact the reason given by Dr J.P. Witney (the second President of the University of Southern California and one of our church’s founders) for the name we have “Church of the Nazarene” ***(Film clip 43:26 - 45:31)***. I see us living up to our name and becoming known in this tri-state area as those people who are not merely following cleverly marketed political band wagons but who are, as agents of light, aware of injustice (our young people would say WOKE), are actively doing everything we can to right that which we know to be socially and politically wrong and advocating in the name of Christ for those who are not able to advocate for themselves.

We, Wesleyan Holiness people, are on record as standing against the horrible Trans - Atlantic Slave Trade and the resultant cruelty of chattel Slavery in the Americas, we stood up against the powerful alcohol industry during the prohibition era because we saw first-hand in the city missions in which we ministered, the destructive impact alcohol reeked on individuals and families. What is the burning contemporary issue that we will be motivated now to engage with in God’s name because we love Him and our neighbors as we love ourselves? I firmly believe that whereas there is so much to do in so many areas of social need, there is one area of pressing need that floats to the top at this time which cannot be ignored - that is the plight of the immigrant. I

see us as the people being particularly sensitive to these immigrants and therefore making a special effort to be hospitable to them reflecting the compassion of our God. Scripture specifically says in the Old Testament:

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God. ’Leviticus 19:33-34

This theme is echoed in the New Testament as well:

‘Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. ’Hebrews 13:2-3

I see the Metro New York District establishing a robust and respected immigration service where immigrants who are desperate and destitute may know that they can find help. They can get good legal advice so they can know and do the truth without the fear of being abused and taken advantage of. Immigration services that will help people to escape the machinations of heartless, dishonest and often incompetent lawyers who prey on them by offering false hope to end of stealing their hard-earned money.

Seventh: Active Missions and Discipleship

The explicit directive of the resurrected Lord to His followers is

‘... “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”’

(Matthew 28:18-20)

These words of the resurrected Jesus set out the overarching outcome to all we are about. Only when this outcome is evident can we claim that we are on mission as agents of light - the reason that we as God’s people are here. I see us as people who because of our own experience being confident of the supreme authority of Christ over everything in the world. I envisage us embracing this agenda of making disciples of all the people who live in our diverse district and in

their countries of origin, regardless of their ethnicity. I see our disciple making involving the twofold task instructed by our Lord of firstly, leading people to personally identify with the Triune God and secondly, helping them to participate with us in our learning, loving communities in obeying the life transforming teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will be successful at this task not on our own but with the assurance of the guaranteed presence of the resurrected Christ partnering with us until the end of the age.

How Are We Going to Get There? - The Issue of Strategy

If our vision for the preferred future of the Metro New York District is Efficient Communication, Effective Pastoral Leadership, Optimal Pastoral Wellness, Full Engagement of the Laity, Intentional Next Generation Engagement, Compassionate Community Involvement focused on Immigration Services and Active Missions and Discipleship, what is the strategy that we will, now more than ever, have to employ in order to arrive at that outcome? Where will we get the resources needed? While this report will not attempt to give granular details of anything approaching a strategic plan please allow me to outline the basic mindset that must guide our attitudes and actions in a systemic way in pursuit of these outcomes.

The Strategy

The fundamental key to arriving at these outcomes is to be real. Be the authentic, Spirit generated Church which is present in the world as the “body of Christ”. According to scripture, Unity in Diversity is the essential characteristic of the Church’s reality:

‘Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has

placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. As it is, there are many parts, but one body. If they were all one part, where would the body be? The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

It is noteworthy that a healthy body exemplifies a kind of unity that is completely different from mere uniformity. In fact, where there is an absence of diversity in the body and the body is simply producing the same undifferentiated cells - that dangerous condition is identified as being cancerous. Unity in diversity subverts radical independence and nourishes healthy systemic interdependence. It's all for one and one for all, it's the inability to leave any one part behind while the other progresses. It's the natural disposition of the stronger part to compensate to help the weaker part. Celebrating Diversity Affirming Unity is the embrace of who we are - the body of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is our primary strategy in realizing these elements of our preferred future that will make us the shining light in a dark place. Being who we are.

Another basic element that must underline the strategy is confidence in the unifying work of the Holy Spirit. Theologians have pointed out that the critically important issue in understanding the events of the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given to the Church, is the "Reversal of Babel". In the story of "the tower of Babel" humankind flaunted their independence of God by attempting to build a tower that would make God irrelevant to them. The judgment was that they were scattered and made not able to understand one another although they were from the same culture and spoke the same language.

'But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel —because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth. 'Genesis 11:5-9

When the Holy Spirit came and launched the Church, on that day He was preparing them to be witnesses to Jesus Christ “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). So, on that day He reversed the judgement of Scattering and confusion in “Babel”. In gathering people from diverse cultures and languages and miraculously causing them to hear the same thing in their own language - The declaration of “the wonders of God”, the Holy Spirit at Pentecost recognized and respected each language represented equally **Celebrating the Diversity**. In causing all of these people in spite of their diverse languages to hear the same thing, the Holy Spirit **Affirmed the Unity**. At Pentecost, there is extreme diversity but with the Holy Spirit at work, that is no reason for difference.

'Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 'Acts 2:7-11

One thought before moving on from the idea of the reversal of Babel! I cannot help but noticing Gods assertion in reference to the rebellion of the people:

“If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.”

God notes that there is an inherent power in unity, even in rebellion against God, to accomplish anything that they, acting in unity, planned to do. Admittedly, in one sense this is a dangerous thought, however it brings to mind the obvious potential for God's glory that the people of God have if they act in unity in line with God's will. Unity has power to make things that are considered impossible, entirely possible.

The final element that influences our mindset as we think about the strategies we need to employ in order to achieve our outcomes is that Unity of all His followers of all time seemed to be the uppermost concern on the heart of Jesus as He culminates His earthly mission. John 17 gives us a clear insight into this primary concern when we reflect on His last prayer. He prays for His disciples, both those present with him and those future who would later believe on Him because of their witness.

'I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:9,11,20-23

The tenor of His prayer is for God to protect His disciples "by the power of His name" "so they may be one" "just as" He and the Father are one. The Unity of the Trinity is a Unity in Diversity - One God Father, Son and Holy Spirit - characterized by Eternal Love. The prayer gives the reason for the need for them to be "brought to complete unity". Jesus says it is "so that the world may believe" that He was sent by the Father and then that the world would "know" that Jesus was sent by the Father and that the Father has loved His disciples in the same way that He loves His own son Jesus. This prayer of Jesus clearly indicates that the unity of His followers is

that crucial thing which brings authenticity and credibility to the Christian gospel. It is frightening to think that the truth of the gospel- for instance in the power and profundity of John 3:16- can be totally subverted if the Christians people who proclaim it are fragmented, cynical, competitive, divided and disunited. The integrity and the functionality of the Gospel to reveal God and God's loving saving act in Christ depends on the loving unity of the Christian community.

In a culture that is increasingly defined by acrimonious identity politics, divisions based on race, gender, sexual orientation, class and economical status and in the face of the bubbling cauldrons of social unrest and upheavals in response to perceptions of mistreatment and discrimination, there is a unique opportunity for the people of God to stand out as a contrasting community that is conspicuously different. By the power of the Holy Spirit the Metro New York District can shine in a dark place and time reflecting the loving unity in diversity of the Triune God itself and thereby be the redemptive presence that God has called us to be dispelling the darkness. Our Strategy bearing in mind who we are, What the Holy Spirit has done and is doing, and what is the priority concern of Jesus is to pursue Unifying Fellowship, Unifying Partnership and Unifying Mentorship.

Firstly: Unifying Fellowship - Inspiration and Information for Everybody together

We must find ways to meet together as a district. We are a family so we must make time and find ways to know family members and inspire one another. This must start with our Pastoral Leaders, then our Lay leader and it must extend to children and youth. All of us who are Nazarenes across cultures and across generations should experience one another and benefit from the tremendous gifts God has deposited across this district. Christian Conferencing is a powerful “means of Grace” in our Wesleyan Holiness tradition. Jesus says when we come together in His name, He is present (Matthew 18:20). There is inspiration, information and edification by simply being together in the presence of Jesus to worship, fellowship and learn.

Secondly: Unifying Partnership - Peer Learning and shared strategic approaches to common problems

We must organize ourselves so that the churches that are of a similar size in attendance and challenges across cultures will be able to enjoy peer learning and find ways to face comparable

challenges. Larry Osbourne notes that just as the game changes with golf total of four people to basketball with ten to Football with twenty-two require different gear, skills, and different strategies for success. Small churches (up to 50) for example have benefits that larger churches do not have but they are challenged by other things such as the lack of critical mass to accomplish some desired tasks. Medium size churches (51-300) are sometimes caught in the middle not benefiting from the small church camaraderie but at the same time not being able to have the resources especially in people that larger churches have. Large churches (301-2000) have the advantage of sometimes being able to reach a wider cross-section of people both internally and externally but are challenged by the increase need for more sophisticated organization and the loss of close relationships. Intentional unifying partnerships will allow churches of the same size to address the challenges in meaningful ways from information that is available and benefit from peer support. This unifying partnership could have a revolutionary impact on our district when it is applied in the functioning of our auxiliaries NMI, NYI and SDMI, to our pastoral leadership as well as to lay leadership and to our church boards.

Thirdly, Unifying Mentorship - a district culture where the strong helps the weak

Frequently, pastors, leaders and churches feel stuck and are faced with a lack of human resources, needed materials and money they have no new ideas or way of getting help. We see a major role that the district can play to find a way where, when weaknesses are identified that we are able to help one another. Stronger churches, in one or other area, pastoral leaders and lay leaders can be paired to those who are having challenges so that they may be strengthened. Developing a mentorship culture instead of a culture of competition and radical independence augurs well for both individuals throughout the district as well as the institution of the local church and the district as a whole. We must put aside our pride be prepared to ask for help and equally to be prepared to help one another A systematic program of mentoring will serve to help the mentoring party as well as the party being mentored.

Resources

What materials will we need? What personnel will we need? What financial support will we need? Our district needs to be in prayer for God to provide these resources so we can implement the Strategy of structured Unifying fellowship, partnership and mentorship that will

utilize the tremendous gifts that are available in our diversity and bring them together in the kind of unity that will enable us to make local churches flourish and to plant strong new churches.

The Palmer Institute:

The Palmer Institute has played a tremendous role in preparing ministers for credentialing on our district and we are planning to expand the role of the Institute. The Palmer Institute has the potential to be the institution on our district to identify, develop and deploy personnel in various areas of ministry not just for persons preparing for the clergy but for the ongoing development of pastoral leadership and lay leadership and for implementation, supervision and support of programs of wellness for pastors.

The Manhattan Initiative:

The Manhattan Initiative has been an innovative development on the Metro New York District. This Integrated Auxiliary of our district is a means whereby our district has been able to steward effectively the property resources that are owned by the district in order to provide financial resources to support the mission. In the face of the financial needs of the district which cannot be met by the existing business model the District Advisory Board has voted to expand the role of the Manhattan Initiative so that it can be the arm of the District which does not only concern itself with stewarding district properties but will be organized to be a development arm of the district. The Manhattan Initiative will include in its mandate the seeking of donors and grant resources that will be needed to support the strategies that the district will employ.

I am particularly grateful for those churches that have been consistent in supporting the mission of the Church of the Nazarene both locally and globally. We remain resolute in our commitment to the World Evangelism fund, Pensions and Benefits and Education Institutions. The good news is that our district exceeded our budgeted income in 2018 by 20,144.38 and that was 29,349.41 more than the same period in 2017. The bad news is that we still had a large hole in the budget which was not met at the end of the year. So, we invite persons who have not yet joined the party to come on board.

I am so grateful to my predecessor Rev Art Alexander and his team for providing a solid platform in every way for us to stand on. I want to specially recognize the sterling contribution of

Rev Dr. John Bowen who as part of Rev Alexander's team, was instrumental in the formation and development of both the afore mentioned Manhattan Initiative and Palmer Institute - thank you Art and thank you John.

Words cannot express my gratitude to my colleagues in the district office one and all. You are a loving Christian family who are as competent as you are caring and committed. God is good to me and He gave you all as the proverbial "wind beneath my wings" thank you. Thank you, District Advisory Board and leaders and volunteers, in all the Auxiliaries, boards and committees in the district - the truth is You Rock.

Thank you, Angela, it's been a dream come true - its 38 years and counting, thank you family and friends for the love and most of all the prayers

<https://youtu.be/HV-f92IbN2U>

No more Lone Rangers "together we are stronger", No to Competition and Comparisons, YES to Cooperation and flourishing, Celebrate Diversity Affirm Unity.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Dr. Samuel Carl W. Vassel