

NORTHEASTERN INDIANA DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

2016 STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS

DAVID G. ROLAND, DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD! We are here to “Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all people. For great is the Lord and worthy of praise;” (I Chronicles 16:24-25a) The Lord is in this place! Let’s declare His glory in celebration and praise.

Welcome to this 74th annual gathering of the Northeastern Indiana District Church of the Nazarene Family.

BREAKING OUT OF THE BUBBLE 2016

A little girl had been trying for months to learn to tie her own shoes. She finally succeeded and then burst into tears. Her father asked her why she was crying and she sobbed, “Because now I’ll have to do it all by myself for the rest of my life.”

When was the last time you felt like that? Maybe you felt all alone in ministry? Look around this room, you are not alone. And seeing you encourages me. You represent a multitude of faithful laborers who week after week are engaging in the work of the Church of the Nazarene across this great NEI District. You may be serving in the children, youth, or adult ministries. You might be a greeter, a church treasurer, a board member, or custodian; unpaid in earthly measure, you regularly invest in others for God’s glory. You prayerfully support your pastoral staff and regularly exemplify good stewardship. I want to say thank you! And Pastors...thank you! You are the very best and I am privileged to partner with you.

My gratitude also extends to gifted leaders who are essential to the operation of the district. These men and women serve with great proficiency and spiritual wisdom. We are so indebted to them for their selfless service and our appreciation is inexpressible.

- Jim Ballenger, District Secretary, is an essential partner in the year round organization of this district assembly. He and his wife Janie are dedicated, efficient, and a tremendous blessing.

- Jeff Kardatzke, District Treasurer, is also an asset to the team. He ensures integrity and helps maintain a framework for financial stability.
- The District Advisory Board is a unified body of seasoned leaders who exhibit the wisdom of God in the administration of district affairs.
- Missions President, Laura High; Youth President, Brandon Kirk; and Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries Director, Danny Hines, are high energy, creative, visionary leaders with a passion to reach children, youth, and adults with the mission of Christ.
- Drs. Marc and Marceil Royer have joined our staff and have been extremely effective in coaching pastors and church boards in strategic planning for ministry success. And just recently Rev. Elias Cabello, has joined us is directing the District Church Planting for Hispanic Ministries.
- Tiffany Ball, Office Manager, with her infectious bubbly spirit brings fresh creativity and professional expertise to the district office. We all lean heavily on her ministry heart.
- Office Assistant, Jeanette Benbow, is engaging and contributes to the strength of the team with her knowledgeable computer skills and secretarial proficiency. She is always ready to help.
- I owe her a great debt of gratitude to my wife, Cheryl, for her partnership in this district assignment. We are a package deal. She is my prayer partner, co-laborer, best friend, and the love of my life.
- Shiloh Park Camp Managers, Dan and Karen Heincker, are visionary leaders that consistently create a safe place for Christian development, faith, family and fun. Together with the Shiloh Park staff, and generous, skilled volunteers, they continue to build a quality ministry to people of all ages. They work closely with the Camp Board under the excellent leadership of chairman, Andy Cole, and are currently building a challenging vision for the next decade of ministry.

Let us never forget that Shiloh Park is the heart of our district gatherings. It serves as an indispensable connector of spiritual vitality for every local church and generation. It is a place of quiet rest apart from the distractions of the world, where campers are exposed to the Word of God and the support of Christian role models. Shiloh Park camps are staffed by local church leaders who follow up on those who are making spiritual strides. It is a place for godly young people to grow in serving Christ and it provides

opportunities to develop and broaden the circles of fellowship and friendship of all ages. Thank you for your support of this great place. At Shiloh Park, we are family!

LET'S CELEBRATE

Do you remember our 2015 theme **#reviveus634**? Our plea for revival echoed Isaiah 6:3-4, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty. The whole earth is full of His glory."

I am happy to report that "from His fullness we have all received grace upon grace" (John 1:16).

The following statistics certainly do not reflect the full magnitude of God's glorious grace over NEI, but let me tell you, Jesus' love is bubbling over!

- Corporate worship increased to 9,311 (+64).
- New conversions nearly doubled the previous year with 1,495 (+601). And we Baptized 365 (-21).
- We increased in the number of New Nazarenes to 331 (+26). WE WELCOME ALL OF THEM! We further increased church membership to 13,166 (+165).
- We increased in our weekly Sunday School & Discipleship ministry to 8,565 (+277).
A Gain in Ministry to Children to 2,416 (+424), while we had a slight decrease in both Youth Ministry to 1,086 (-98), and Adult Ministry to 5,063 (-49).
- Discipleship Responsibility Contacts grew to 23,217 (+1,218).
- Total Raised for all purposes decreased \$14,623,119 (-\$257,774).
- Church property value increased to \$104,700,996 (+\$3,268,768) while our Indebtedness decreased to \$8,594,164 (-\$1,568,298).

FUNDING THE MISSION

- ✓ Your faithful stewardship was evidenced by the Funding the Mission giving! World Evangelism Fund \$788,821 (103.6%) **Overpaid by +\$27,739**
- ✓ Pension and Benefits \$311,634 (100%) **PAID IN FULL**
- ✓ Olivet Nazarene University \$311,634 (100%) **PAID IN FULL**
- ✓ District Fund for Others \$653,444 (98.09%) Underpaid -\$12,672

AWARDS

We recognize the following churches and leaders who have broken through barriers to receive awards in the following categories:

Missional Award of Excellence

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

Alexandria – Rev. Mark Diemer	Anderson Eastview – Rev. Mike Clark
Anderson First – Rev. Gary Cable	Angola – Rev. Tony Baker
Auburn – Rev. Doug Thomas	Blue River – Rev. Bryan Hughes
Collett – Rev. Billy Stanton	Elkhart Crossroads – Rev. Tim Fisher
Fort Wayne Liberty Mills -- Rev. Terry Fittro	Fort Wayne Trinity -- Rev. Terry Habegger
Fort Wayne Many Nations -- Rev. Javier Mondragon	Lynn -- Rev. Tom Govin
Marion First -- Rev. Greg Clark	Muncie South Side -- Rev. Andy Cole
Shipshewana -- Rev. Randy Marshall	Tunker Sugar Creek -- Rev. Larry Sheets
Warsaw New Harvest -- Rev. Bill Keen	Winchester -- Rev. Danny Hines
Yorktown – Rev. Marty Ballard	

Evangelism & Discipleship Award

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

Anderson Eastview	Anderson First	Angola
Auburn	Bluffton	Collett
Columbia City	Dunkirk	Fort Wayne Grace Point
Fort Wayne Trinity	Fort Wayne West Main	Fort Wayne Many Nations
Geneva	Kendallville Cross Pointe	Ligonier
Muncie Forest Park	Muncie South Side	Shipshewana
Tunker Sugar Creek	Wabash	Warsaw New Harvest

Winchester

Yorktown

Stewardship Recognition

[All Allocations Paid in Full]

Alexandria, Anderson Eastview, Anderson First, Anderson Parkview, Angola, Auburn, Berne, Bluffton, Bristol, Churubusco, Collett, Columbia City, Decatur Common Ground, Elkhart Crossroads Community, Elkhart Northside, Elwood, Farmland, Fort Wayne Elmhurst, Fort Wayne Grace Point, Fort Wayne Liberty Mills, Fort Wayne Many Nations, Fort Wayne Trinity, Fort Wayne West Main, Gaston, Geneva, Harris Chapel, Hartford City, Huntington First, Jimtown Family, Kendallville Cross Pointe Family, Ligonier, Lynn, Marion First, Marion Lincoln Boulevard, Monroeville, Montpelier Cornerstone Community, Mount Hope, Muncie First, Muncie Forest Park, Muncie Northside, Muncie Riverview, Muncie South Side/Muncie New Horizon, New Paris, North Manchester, Olive Branch, Ossian, Parker City, Peru, Portland First, Redkey, Shippshewana, Swayzee, Tunker Sugar Creek, Union Chapel, Van Buren, Wabash, Warsaw New Harvest, Winchester, Yorktown.

Generational Leadership Award 2016

The Psalmist declared with great resolve, “We will tell the next generation the praise worthy deeds of the Lord” (Psalms 78:4). The NEI District Generational Leadership Award expresses our appreciation to those who have proclaimed God’s praises to the next generation by living exemplary lives and serving others selflessly. Today we honor two outstanding NEI Generational Leaders, who are deserving of our highest recognition and gratitude.

REV. OSCAR H. & DORIS SHEETS

From his early childhood, Oscar Sheets fulfilled God’s call to preach and has touched countless lives for the cause of Christ. When he was just a boy, his grandmother observed him standing on an old crate in their front yard. He was preaching his heart out, but she thought he was cussing and using God’s name in vain.

Oscar met Doris at First Church of the Nazarene in Frankford, Indiana where both of their families were active members. Love sparked a sweet courtship and they were married at Old Frankfort First Church on September 9, 1951.

In preparation for ministry, Oscar and Doris moved to Bourbonnais, Illinois where they attended Olivet Nazarene College. Oscar earned a Bachelor of Theology degree. He was ordained in 1957 on the Northeastern Indiana District.

Oscar and Doris obeyed God's call to pastor churches of the Nazarene across the state of Indiana for 44 years. They pastored in Frankfort, Arcadia, Kokomo Forest Lawn, Winamac First Church, Mishawaka, Lafayette, and Elkhart Northside Church of the Nazarene where they officially retired in 2000. Their oldest grandson, Tim Sheets, is now building on this rich heritage as the pastor of Elkhart Northside. Oscar continues to be a popular preacher, often requested for pulpit supply. Since retiring, he and Doris have been such a blessing as interim pastors at Kendallville, Shipshewana and New Horizons in Pickford, Michigan.

These two leaders are district minded. Oscar has served on the District Advisory Board, Olivet Nazarene University Trustee, District Nazarene Young Peoples Society President, Youth Camp Director, District Sunday School Chairman, a delegate to several General Assemblies and interim District Superintendent.

Doris has served in a supportive role as Children's Minister, Mission's President, pianist and violinist in worship services as well as wife, mother, hostess, gardener, cook, and substitute teacher.

The Sheets have four married children: Jerry & Susan Sheets, Larry & Connie Sheets, Jill & Rick Rice, and Gary & Kim Sheets. From generation to generation the Sheets have lived to declare God's love as, Jerry, Larry, Rick, Gary, and grandson Tim are all Elders in the Church of the Nazarene. Their daughter, Jill, is a District NMI President in Michigan and a Trustee at Olivet Nazarene University. Oscar and Doris are the proud grandparents of 12 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Three of their children graduated from ONU and 10 of their grandchildren have attended ONU.

With selfless service and hearts for God's glory, Oscar and Doris Sheets have lived commendable lives and proclaimed God's truths to all generations. As we celebrate their legacy we praise the matchless name of Jesus for His love that endures forever.

Let's Break Out of the Bubble

Imagine living inside a bubble. Your first thought may be comfort, protection, or contentment. However, bound by the bubble you might begin to feel isolated and restricted. The desire to explore, to grow, to entertain new ideas and to leap out in faith is enticing but it is a struggle to break out of the bubble.

The comfort of the bubble is a dangerous security when we serve a boundless God. He urges us to anticipate exceedingly abundantly more than all we can ask or imagine. And yet, the bubble creates a barrier that not only limits us but limits what we allow God to do in us and through us.

A cursory observation of the district growth for the past ten years reveals a stable district with a few increases and decreases annually over the decade. Thank God for that stability! However, it could tend to lure us into feelings of contentment and lull us to sleep in satisfaction, settling for mediocrity.

Tonight let's break out of our bubble and burst through the barriers! Let's break through to victory in prayer, and let's seek the Holy Spirit to fill us until we pop with power to accomplish our God sized mission.

What is our mission? Our mission is to reach our kids, our grandkids, and our community kids for Jesus Christ. In our own strength, it is impossible. Some of you may be in a crucible, burdened for your own children, or your church children. To reach them we must live in the extraordinary power of Almighty God. We need a double portion of God's Spirit.

The scriptures teach in II Kings 2 that the great prophet Elijah was growing old and nearing the end of his time. God instructed him to embrace young Elisha as his successor. Elisha knew this was his last chance to draw wisdom from his mentor. Elijah knew it was his last chance to offer spiritual instruction. As they walked together along the Jordan, Elijah asked Elisha, "Tell me what can I do for you before I am taken away?" Elisha replied, "Please let me inherit a double portion of your spirit."

His request was not for personal wealth, power, or greatness, but one of full surrender and a desperate plea for more of God's anointing. Their journey offers four lessons that will help the NEI District break out of the barriers that keep us from living in the extraordinary power of God's Holy Spirit. Let's follow their journey and the double blessing it produced.

(1) GILGAL, THE PLACE OF SEPARATION

God first led Elijah and Elisha to Gilgal, the place of separation. It was here that centuries before, the swift flood waters of the Jordan River threatened to block the Israelites from seizing God's Promised Land. Joshua urged the people to separate themselves from their past and break out through the barriers of paralyzing fear and unbelief and to enter the waters by faith. They had to be a separate people, belonging to God alone and ready to obey Him at all cost. Because they obeyed, the waters parted and they walked across on dry ground to embrace the Promised Land.

Now, generations later, Elijah and Elisha stand at the altar of stones erected by Joshua and celebrate the miracles of God. They too are set apart for His service. The altar served as a reminder to them and to us that it is the biblical duty of every generation of Christians to see to it that the next generation hears about the mighty acts of God.

Chuck Swindoll wrote, "It is during the child-rearing and adolescent years that a parent is called by God to carry out one major mission, to model authenticity." How are we doing? Are we declaring the mighty acts of God? Are we modeling Christ at home, at work, and on the sports field?

May our prayer of separation be as that of Andrew Murray who prayed, "Father, let the Holy Ghost have full dominion over me. In my home, in my temper, in every word of my tongue, in every thought of my heart, and in every feeling toward my fellow men; let the Holy Spirit have entire possession of me."

What barriers are preventing us as individuals and as a church body from entering into God's promises today? Just as with the Israelites, paralyzing fear and unbelief threaten to defeat us today.

Disobedience, apathy, and prayerlessness grieve the heart of God. May God give us such an intense desire for Him that we enter into our closets of prayer and stay there until we break through to receive a

double portion of God's Spirit. Jesus promises, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you!" Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, leaders will grow in faith and vision. Prayer meetings will be God focused rather than need focused. Marriages will be restored. Believers will step into faith. Worship services will be alive and full of God's Spirit. The sick will be healed, the lost will be saved, and the bills will be paid!

(2) BETHEL, THE PLACE OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

Elijah and Elisha, in obedience to God, journeyed on to Bethel, the place of faith and obedience. It is here that Elijah and Elisha are reminded of an ancient conversation between the Heavenly Father and His son, Abraham. God said, "Abraham, I am going to bless you; I am going to multiply you; your descendants will be greater than the sand of the sea, and I am going to bless the world through you." Abraham responded to God in faith and full surrender. He pitched his tent and built an altar in essence declaring, I am going to trust God with all my life.

Even though Abraham and Sarah were old and had no children, and God's promises seemed too good to be true, Abraham believed God would somehow break through the barriers to fulfill His divine plan.

Elijah and Elisha at this same place recalled the miracles of multiplication as the world was blessed through Abraham's descendants. In every generation God is looking for successors who will courageously break out in faith to receive a double portion of His Spirit and trust God for the impossible.

The truth is, every church, regardless of size or location, must reproduce itself for the next generation. A church that believes in multiplication will earnestly pray for a God sized vision to reach entire families for Christ. Fifty years from now most of us will be dead and gone, but there will still be a church. The question is, will we have led them to the double portion; or will we have taught them to just settle for faith bound in a bubble of doubt?

NEI knows how to multiply! God has blessed us through the 2020 Strategy, a challenge that was presented at assembly last year. The leaders of each local church were encouraged to prayerfully

dream beyond the boundaries of human efforts and to establish goals that with God's help could be accomplishment by 2020. Here is a summary of those goals:

- By faith, we will increase local church membership by 38% (to 18,000 members).
- By faith, we will increase worship attendance by 147% (to 23,000).
- By faith, we will increase Sunday School and Discipleship by 93% (to 16,000 increase).
- By faith, we will start 40 new works.

These projections reflect tremendous faith in God's ability, *"...to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to His power that is at work within us"* (Ephesians 3:20). As every church makes these goals a priority, we will work doubly hard, pray doubly hard, and trust God for a double portion in order to become a "Break Out" District.

Our progress has already begun and we celebrate that we have 12 New Church Sponsorships this year. Muncie South Side, Anderson First, Elkhart Crossroads, Fort Wayne Grace Point, and Lynn each sponsoring one work and Bluffton sponsoring seven new works.

Phil Stevenson, in *Five Things Anyone Can Do to Help Start a New Church*, offers five suggestions on how you can participate in church multiplication to reach the next generation.

1. Go Public. Pastors and people, talk openly and often about the possibilities of starting a new church.
2. Genuine Prayer. Ask God to, "...till the soil of unresponsive people, closed communities, and hardened attitudes." God is able.
3. Generate Enthusiasm. Give testimonials, preach on the harvest, and invite church planters to come and tell their stories.
4. Generously Invest. Share resources and manpower to nurture a growing environment.
5. Grant Permission. Pastor, give your congregation permission. Encourage them to reach outside of your church to start new small group Bible studies, satellite services to the communities

nearby, or the start of a new church where God is opening doors. That is breaking out of the bubble in faith with the next generation in mind.

(3) JERICHO, A PLACE OF TRUST

Elijah and Elisha journeyed on with God to the third location, Jericho, a place of trust. Although generations had passed, they would never forget hearing about the battle of Jericho. The Israelites had entered the promised land but it was inhabited and territory had to be strategically conquered. The walls surrounding the city of Jericho were heavily fortified, impenetrable. There was no question, that barrier was beyond their ability to break. Joshua listened to God, gathered an army and gave them strange instructions. They would not fight but simply march around the city and the walls would fall. Trusting God, they marched.

For six days the army marched in silence. The only sound was the sound of the ram's horns blown by the priest at the command of Joshua. On the seventh day after the seventh lap, the people shouted and the walls came tumbling down.

Just as Elijah and Elisha were inspired by recalling this great miracle, we too are inspired to trust God more completely.

The walls of Jericho may symbolize barriers in your home or your church that seem impenetrable. Are you willing to trust God to help you break free?

Maybe you envision God inside the bubble, powerless to help you. Your situation may seem so hopeless that you have just settled into unbelief. It is possible there are some Joshua's here trying to minister in your own strength and you are discovering you are powerless. We can trust God's Word that He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. The walls will come down and "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." Go back to the scripture and read again about the Jericho miracle, then reestablish your trust in Almighty God and give Him praise!

(4) THE JORDAN RIVER, A PLACE OF SURRENDER

God continued to lead Elijah and Elisha on their journey. They came to the Jordan River. Remember, it was here they experienced God's miraculous power for themselves. Elijah struck the water with his cloak, the river parted and they crossed on dry ground. Throughout their journey Elijah declared God's extraordinary works and gave Him praise.

God's lessons first began at Gilgal, a place of separation. Then on to Bethel, a place of faith. The third stop was Jericho, a place of trust. Now here on the banks of the Jordan, God has revealed to Elijah that his time on earth was nearing an end. Jordan was a place of full surrender for both the old prophet and his young successor.

When Elijah asked Elisha what more he could do for him, his response, "A double portion is my plea. Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit."

There on the edge of the Jordan River Elisha surrendered to God. His request was not out of selfish ambition, notability or fortune. He was not interested in comfort or security. He was not willing to settle for anything less than God's holiness. My plans, my ambitions, everything I am or ever hope to be, I lay it down.

Elisha accepted his mission to declare the mighty works of God to the next generation. The double portion of God's blessing fell on him and he carried on with the ministry Elijah had begun, performing more recorded miracles than anyone else in the scripture other than Jesus.

Listen carefully, if you get nothing else this evening, hear this! We serve Almighty God, the King of Glory. He is perfect in power. Faith bound in a bubble produces only human results. Let's break out and break through to receive a double portion of HIS SPIRIT! Maintenance ministry can no longer be our mode of operation. Children, youth, and families are at stake.

Chip Ingram of Focus on the Family shared some alarming facts on the family which underscore our mandate to minister to the family.

- Only 25% of families in America have both a mom and dad in the home with the kids.
- One third of all people who go through divorce will live below the poverty level.

- 60% of all couples live together before they get married.
- Experts attribute the primary cause of family disintegration to the increased failure to hold marriage and marriage commitments in high esteem.
- When marriage fails and more specifically dads are absent, dysfunction in children increases. Violence, felonies, depression, teen suicide, promiscuity, gang involvements, and drug abuse are at their highest predictability factor.

America needs a double portion of God's Spirit. NEI needs a double portion of God's Spirit, your church and you as an individual need a double portion of God's Spirit. Church leaders, are we so desperate for the Lord that we are willing to stay on our knees until we have received the double blessing so we can declare the mighty works of God to the next generation?

Pastors are you powerless, bound up in a bubble of discouragement? You need a double portion of God's Spirit. A double portion does not mean twice as much of God because He cannot be measured or contained. A double portion of His Spirit means that we empty ourselves of all fear and doubt, then fully surrender to receive the boundless love of Jesus Christ that cannot help but bubble over.

When the church is at its best and functioning in the power of the Holy Spirit it is fortifying Christian families and reaching into the community of non-believers with hope and a helping hand. It is providing biblical solutions to difficult situations.

Theologian, John Piper, expressed it well, "God does not drop a new Bible from heaven on every generation. He intends that the older generation will teach the newer generation to read, and think, and trust, and obey, and rejoice." How about your family? Are your children and grandchildren learning to love the scriptures, to pray, and obey God? Do you rejoice in His mighty acts and give Him praise?

Maybe some of you have unsaved family members that have literally broken your heart. You pray night and day for their salvation. Now multiply that burden and embrace your church and community kids passionately in prayer. We must reach the next generation for Christ. To do that we need a double portion of God's Spirit of love, joy, hope, and faith. God is good and great and mighty to save. He can do immeasurable more than all we ask or think.

Psalm 145:4 is so relevant to our mission to reach the family, *“One generation shall praise His works to another, and shall declare His mighty acts.”*

For over a year the Lord has burdened my heart for the family. He presented to me a God sized challenge. We have been so blessed this year to minister to 2,416 children and 1,086 youth on a weekly basis. But think about the many children and youth in your family and community who do not know the life changing power of Jesus Christ. Without your loving prayers, they have no hope.

The challenge, I must remind you is God sized. So here it is. Let’s double the number of youth and children we minister to this year. Let’s break out of that bubble and pray until we have fully surrendered, then serve until we have accomplished God’s mission. Children and youth are not all well behaved, they come from diverse cultures, and economic backgrounds but Jesus loves them all and just like Jesus we must love them too.

NEI will celebrate our 75th Anniversary at our next assembly. It will be a grand celebration when we witness God’s mission accomplished. Let’s double the number of children to 4,832 and let’s double the number of youth to 2,172.

Pastors ... will you accept the challenge? Board Members how about you? Sunday School teachers, youth and children’s workers, are you ready to break out of the bubble and double?

Pastors, are you willing to accept the challenge to “Break Out of the Bubble” and Double up on the ministry to our children and youth this year? If so, I want you to come forward and take one of these Double Bubble gum machines as a reminder all year long that children and youth are our priority. As we sing this song, come and accept the challenge.

Respectfully submitted,

David G. Roland