

**IMPORTANT
QUESTIONS**
(AND ANSWERS!)

**FOR THE NAZARENE
SUNDAY SCHOOL
TEACHER**

YOU ARE VITAL!

Someone has said, "A person can do a lot if he doesn't care who gets the credit for it."

As a Sunday School teacher, you are the personification of that quote. You are one of thousands of "unsung heroes" in the Church of the Nazarene who weekly impact their world without receiving any acclaim.

You, the teacher, are an invaluable cog in the overall mechanism of the church—both your local church and the International Church of the Nazarene. Let's look at some of the functions you, the teacher, perform:

- * You are an extension of the pastor's ministry. The pastor's responsibility is to preach sermons, administer the church, and keep the vision alive for his congregation. When a pastor has a plan to reach the community, he must find a way to transfer his dreams to the congregation. The best group to catch and help carry out that conception is the dedicated band of Sunday School teachers.

- * You teach people the Word of God and how to apply it to their lives. You sow seeds of Bible study that will grow and multiply within them. You help them develop the skills of going to God's Word that they will use through their entire lives.

- * You are your pupils' model of a growing Christian. They will watch you and emulate you even when you don't realize it. The way you live your Christianity will rub off on your students.

- * You give the church personalization. "Sunday School is the place where I'm known by name," report many attenders. It's easy for a person to "hide" or even get "lost" in a church service, but not in Sunday School. The Sunday School classroom is the place where a person feels known, loved, and accepted as an individual . . . a place of belonging.

- * You are the ministering arm of the church. Committed, caring teachers become "undershepherds" who reach, teach, care for, and nurture their students.

The Sunday School in the Church of the Nazarene has succeeded, and continues to succeed, because of you!

Yes . . . you, teacher, are important. We see the hours of study you put into your preparation. We notice your outreach effort goes beyond Sunday morning class time into individual lives, homes, and schools. We know your investment makes more of an impact than anyone will ever realize.

Whether you're new to the teaching ranks, or a seasoned pro, you are the backbone of the church. As you see your local church grow through your prayerful efforts, remember, your committed ministry affects an entire denomination worldwide!

Dr. Phil Riley
Director, Sunday School Ministries Division

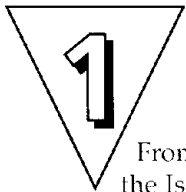


People become Sunday School teachers for various reasons. Some clearly see this as a calling—a task God has for them. Others are willing to serve in any way they can, and as a result, are placed in a Sunday School class. Many people teach Sunday School because they believe in this outreach organization and want to see it grow—perhaps they even found Christ through this medium.

Regardless of your reason for committing to this challenge, we want to help you be the most informed teacher you can be.

In November 1991 the total number of Nazarene church members in the U.S. and Canada was reported to be 538,068. It is interesting to note that in the past 10 years (1982-91) 285,581 joined by profession of faith. One may conclude that more than half of our current church members are relatively new to our church. Many of these may not fully understand who we are as a denomination—our beliefs, our emphases, our goals. They will look to you, their Sunday School teacher, for this important information.

We've prepared this brochure for you—to help you be that informed teacher. In the next few pages, we've compiled some of the most important questions needed to be a successful teacher in a Nazarene Sunday School. Whether you're a veteran teacher or a beginner, we encourage you to read through this resource looking for significant points of emphasis for future reference.



What is the purpose of Sunday School?

Of course, the idea of Sunday School did not begin with the Church of the Nazarene. From the Garden of Eden, where God personally tutored Adam and Eve; to Abraham and the Israelites, who were instructed to teach the truths of God in the home; to the early Jewish synagogues; to the catechetical schools of the Early Church; to our present Sunday School the learning process has always been most effective in small-group settings.

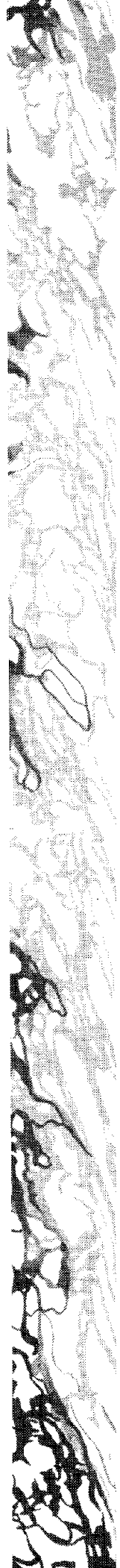
Through the study and interaction of the Sunday School class, believers learn how to relate God's truths to their daily challenges. This effective small-group organization still offers the finishing touch of support, caring, and fellowship to an individual.

Sunday School has always been an effective outreach arm of the church. Through Sunday School enlistment, the unchurched are located, visited, and incorporated into a class. Besides receiving personal spiritual nourishment, students learn how to reach out to others in their workplaces and communities.

And of course, Sunday School is a tool. Through it, we can teach the Word of God effectively to lead people into salvation, the experience of entire sanctification, and continued spiritual growth.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

1. See the task as a spiritual calling, more than a job.
 2. Prepare each lesson thoroughly.
 3. Arrive at least 15 minutes before class to arrange materials and greet pupils.
 4. Work with the department supervisor to plan, carry out, and evaluate each unit of study.
 5. Attractively arrange the area in which the class meets.
 6. Complete attendance and personal data records of pupils.
 7. Build a list of prospects for the class.
 8. Contact absentees faithfully.
 9. Plan social activities for the class.
 10. Notify the proper person well in advance of anticipated absences.
1. Become personally acquainted with each pupil, knowing details such as name, spiritual level, needs, family relationship.
 2. Pray earnestly for each pupil.
 3. Involve the pupil in the truth to be learned.
 4. Provide opportunity for the salvation of each pupil and subsequent maturation in Christ.
 5. Visit in each home.
 6. Observe pupil activities at school, home, work, etc., when possible.
 7. Build rapport with other family members.
1. Attend staff conferences and department meetings.
 2. Remain loyal and obedient to the church, pastor, and the Sunday School Ministries Board in this assignment.
 3. Be aware of and support departmental and Sunday School Ministries goals.
1. Attend staff training courses or engage in an individual study plan on a regular basis.
 2. Keep informed of current information about the Sunday School.
 3. Attend seminars, conventions, and workshops.
 4. Evaluate your teaching periodically and find ways to improve.
 5. Develop a thorough understanding of the age level you teach.
 6. Actively maintain a growing relationship with Christ through personal Bible study, prayer, service opportunities, and worship.





2

What are my specific responsibilities as a Sunday School teacher?

Most business corporations compile job descriptions. Why? So employees will have clearly defined parameters in which to work. Job descriptions help employees set goals and meet challenges.

On the preceding page is a sample job description for a Sunday School teacher. Evaluate your responsibilities against this job description. Mark areas in which you excel (and give yourself a big pat on the back). Highlight areas in which you wish to improve. Write down ways in which you can grow.

3

Where does Sunday School fall in the structure of the Church of the Nazarene?

As a Sunday School teacher, you are a vital organ in a living body. Your ministry in the Sunday School falls under the ministry of your church's Sunday School Ministries Board. This board oversees and encourages growth in the Sunday School, while supervising other Sunday and weekday programs involving children, youth, and adults.

As a Sunday School teacher, you are a leader in the Sunday School structure of the local church. The best leaders, and the best planners of an organization's future are those who understand the purpose of the organization. To help us be effective leaders today and tomorrow, let's review the history of our church.

4

How did the Church of the Nazarene begin?

The Church of the Nazarene marks its birthdate as October 13, 1908, in Pilot Point, Tex. Several holiness groups came together on that date from across America to form the new denomination.

The name and one of our denomination's most dynamic leaders, came from a local congregation in Los Angeles. Dr. Phineas F. Bresee, who had been a pastor and district superintendent in the Methodist church, found himself without a place to preach as a result of his experience of heart holiness and his desire to proclaim it. At the urging of several friends and associates, he began a local church that offered a church home for the poor and a message of entire sanctification.

Dr. J. P. Widney, a distinguished physician, associated himself with this new group. In the Sunday morning service, when this group of people had decided to formally organize a local church, Dr. Widney spoke:

Notice that Christ does not say: "Accept the creed which I frame; observe the church forms of rituals I devise; or, join the church I found." He only said, "Follow Me." It is as though He had said, "Come, live my life with Me." What does it mean? It means that Christianity is not a creed, not an ecclesiasticism, not a ritual, but a life.

It is this simple Christ life, which the world hungers for, and which gives birth to the cry that goes up from all lands. We are tired of forms and creeds. Let us go back to Christ. It is this Christ life which we are to take out with us and teach and live in this city mission work which is our chosen field.

In this message, Widney explained that in thinking of a name for the church, the word *Nazarene* had come to him one morning, following a night of prayer. This name symbolized "the toiling, lowly mission of Christ." It was the name Jesus used of himself, Widney declared, the name that was used in derision of Him by His enemies, the name that above all others linked Him to the great toiling, struggling, sorrowing heart of the world. It is Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, to whom the world in its misery and despair turns, that it may have hope.

A vote was held. Those in the service unanimously chose the Church of the Nazarene as the name for this new church.

The first piece of Nazarene literature ever printed, a flier advertising the meetings, bore this message:

The Church of the Nazarene is a simple, primitive church, a church of the people and for the people. It has no new doctrines, only the old, old Bible truths. It seeks to discard all superfluous forms and ecclesiasticism and go back to the plain simple words of Christ. It is

not a mission, but a church with a mission. It is a banding together of hearts that have found the peace of God, and which now in their gladness, go out to carry the message of the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Christ to other suffering, discouraged, sin-sick souls. Its mission is to everyone upon whom the battle of life has been sore, and to every heart that hungers for cleansing from sin. Come.

As time progressed, the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles flourished. Dr. Bresee obviously cared for individuals. He greeted everyone who walked in the doors on Sunday. If a poor person came in, Bresee would wrap his arm around the person and lead him to the best seat in the house.

Bresee had not intended to found a new denomination. His goal had been to preach holiness to the poor. The organization of the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles had been a vehicle to accomplish that purpose. However, as the work abounded there, cries for help came from other areas—cries that Bresee could not ignore.

By 1905, other Churches of the Nazarene had multiplied to include 26 organized congregations in Los Angeles, southern California, northern California, Washington, Idaho, Salt Lake, Omaha, and Chicago.

At the time the Church of the Nazarene was founded in Los Angeles, a holiness movement was sweeping the whole nation. Beginning in 1907, the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Holiness Church of Christ began discussions of joining together.

Delegates of the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America and the Church of the Nazarene convened a General Assembly in Chicago in 1907. These two merging groups agreed upon a church government that balanced the need for a superintendency with the independence of local congregations. This assembly adopted a name for the united body of both organizations: The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. Phineas F. Bresee and Hiram F. Reynolds were elected general superintendents.

Rev. E. A. Girvin writes, "Shortly after the adjournment of the General Assembly of 1907, the Holiness Church of Christ, representing more than 3,000 members in the Southern states, decided to unite with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, and requested that a joint session of the General Council of that church and the General Assembly of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene be held at Pilot Point, Texas, in October, 1908."

October 8-14, 1908, the General Assembly sessions were held in a large tent, with a seating capacity of 1,000. It was on October 13, 1908, that Rev. R. B. Mitchell, president of the Holiness Church of Christ, moved that "the union of the two churches be now consummated." The motion was seconded and carried unanimously by a standing vote amid great enthusiasm. Although other bodies united with the Church of the Nazarene later, this is the date we celebrate as the anniversary of our denomination's beginnings.

Eventually, we dropped "Pentecostal" from our name. Originally, the word *Pentecostal* was used to indicate an association with a new focus on the work of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification. When the word became associated more generally with the doctrine of speaking in tongues, we became simply the Church of the Nazarene.

For more detailed information about our beginnings, we recommend Called unto Holiness by Timothy L. Smith.

5

When did the Church of the Nazarene become international?

From its inception, the Church of the Nazarene has had an international dimension. Shortly after the 1908 uniting, we were joined by the Pentecostal Church of Scotland and later by holiness groups in other countries.

Missions expansion into new world areas began in Asia in 1898, in Central America by 1900, in the Caribbean by 1902, in Africa in 1907, and in South America by 1909. Expansion into the Australia-South Pacific area began in 1945 and into continental Europe in 1948. By 1936, the ratio of national workers to missionaries throughout the worldwide Church of the Nazarene was greater than five to one.

In 1992, the Church of the Nazarene has an international presence in 104 countries, and a reported membership of 1,002,150 distributed throughout the 10,164 congregations. In the *1991 to 1992 Almanac of the Christian World*, the Church of the Nazarene is listed among the 13 largest mission agencies in North America.

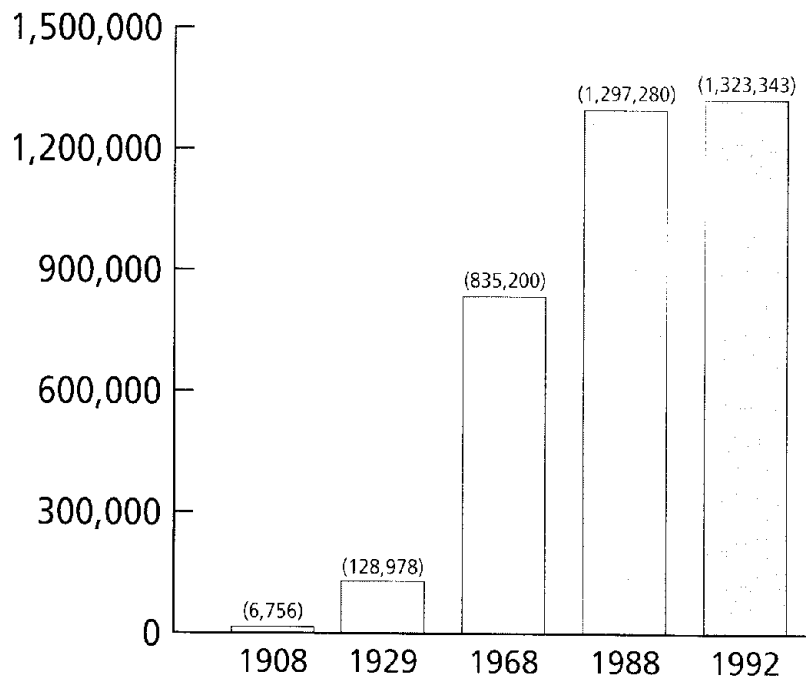
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How about Sunday School? When did the Church of the Nazarene start this program?

The Church of the Nazarene adopted the Sunday School as a major teaching agency in the early days of the denomination. According to Timothy Smith in *Called unto Holiness*, Dr. Bresee "established a Sunday School the day the Church of the Nazarene was organized, and faithfully promoted its work across the years."

From those beginning days, wherever there was a Church of the Nazarene, it was accompanied by a Sunday School. In 1908, 98 Sunday Schools were in existence, with a total of 6,756 people enrolled. In 1923, the Sunday School Ministries Division, then called the Department of Church Schools, was created by the General Assembly. This department was given responsibility for all Sunday School curriculum. And Sunday School continued to grow in the Church of the Nazarene.

Sunday School Enrollment



Today, Sunday School is still growing in the Church of the Nazarene, as is the church itself. Although we're one of the younger denominations, less than 100 years old, more than 1,002,150 people are members of our church worldwide—this does not include the thousands who attend regularly but have not made membership commitments.

With so many other churches on the denominational horizon, why has the Church of the Nazarene flourished? A great deal of the answer is because of our distinctive doctrine of holiness. Let's take a look at that, and some of the other, basic beliefs the Church of the Nazarene holds.

7

What do we believe?

The *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* has a concise Agreed Statement of Belief: Recognizing that the right and privilege of persons to church membership rest upon the fact of their being regenerate, we would require only such avowals of belief as are essential to Christian experience. We, therefore, deem belief in the following brief statements to be sufficient. We believe:

- ▶ In one God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ▶ That the Old and New Testament Scriptures, given by plenary inspiration, contain all truth necessary to faith and Christian living.
- ▶ That man is born with a fallen nature, and is, therefore inclined to evil and that continually.

- ▶ That the finally impenitent are hopelessly and eternally lost.
- ▶ That the atonement through Jesus Christ is for the whole human race; and that whosoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and regenerated and saved from the dominion of sin.
- ▶ That believers are to be sanctified wholly, subsequent to regeneration, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ▶ That the Holy Spirit bears witness to the new birth, and also to the entire sanctification of believers.
- ▶ That our Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place.

For the serious student of Nazarene doctrine, the Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene from the 1989 *Manual* are included:

I. The Triune God

1. We believe in one eternally existent, infinite God, Sovereign of the universe; that He only is God, creative and administrative, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose; that He, as God, is Triune in essential being, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[Genesis 1; Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Isaiah 5:16; 6:1-7; 40:18-31; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; John 14:6-27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 2:13-18]

II. Jesus Christ

2. We believe in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead; that He was eternally one with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus united in one Person very God and very man, the God-man.

We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and that He truly arose from the dead and took again His body, together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven and is there engaged in intercession for us.

[Matthew 1:20-25; 16:15-16; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1-18; Acts 2:22-36; Romans 8:3, 32-34; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:12-22; 1 Timothy 6:14-16; Hebrews 1:1-5; 7:22-28; 9:24-28; 1 John 1:1-3; 4:2-3, 15]

III. The Holy Spirit

3. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is ever present and efficiently active in and with the Church of Christ, convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers, and guiding into all truth as it is in Jesus.

[John 7:39; 14:15-18, 26; 16:7-15; Acts 2:33; 15:8-9; Romans 8:1-27; Galatians 3:1-14; 4:6; Ephesians 3:14-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 3:24; 4:13]

IV. The Holy Scriptures

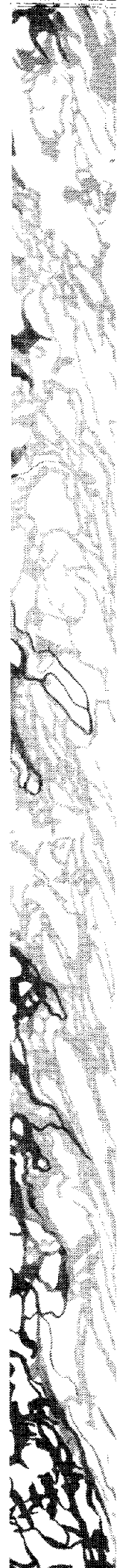
4. We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.


[Luke 24:44-47; John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21]

V. Sin, Original and Personal

5. We believe that sin came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, and death by sin. We believe that sin is of two kinds: original sin or depravity, and actual or personal sin.

5.1. We believe that original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiri-





tual life, and inclined to evil, and that continually. We further believe that original sin continues to exist with the new life of the regenerate, until eradicated by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

5.2. We believe that original sin differs from actual sin in that it constitutes an inherited propensity to actual sin for which no one is accountable until its divinely provided remedy is neglected or rejected.

5.3. We believe that actual or personal sin is a voluntary violation of a known law of God by a morally responsible person. It is therefore not to be confused with involuntary and inescapable shortcomings, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures, or other deviations from a standard of perfect conduct which are the residual effects of the Fall. However, such innocent effects do not include attitudes or responses contrary to the spirit of Christ, which may properly be called sins of the spirit. We believe that personal sin is primarily and essentially a violation of the law of love; and that in relation to Christ sin may be defined as unbelief.

[Original sin: Genesis 3; 6:5; Job 15:14; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:18-25; 5:12-14; 7:1—8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 1:7-8

Personal sin: Matthew 22:36-40 (with 1 John 3:4); John 8:34-36; 16:8-9; Romans 3:23; 6:15-23; 8:18-24; 14:23; 1 John 1:9—2:4; 3:7-10]

VI. Atonement

6. We believe that Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood, and by His meritorious death on the Cross, made a full atonement for all human sin, and that this Atonement is the only ground of salvation, and that it is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. The Atonement is graciously efficacious for the salvation of the irresponsible and for the children in innocency, but is efficacious for the salvation of those who reach the age of responsibility only when they repent and believe.

[Isaiah 53:5-6, 11; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:46-48; John 1:29; 3:14-17; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 3:21-26; 4:17-25; 5:6-21; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Galatians 1:3-4; 3:13-14; Colossians 1:19-23; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:9; 9:11-14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 2:19-25; 1 John 2:1-2]

VII. Free Agency

7. We believe that man's creation in Godlikeness included ability to choose between right and wrong, and that thus he was made morally responsible; that through the fall of Adam he became depraved so that he cannot now turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God. But we also believe that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all men, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight.

We believe that man, though in the possession of the experience of regeneration and entire sanctification, may fall from grace and apostatize and, unless he repent of his sin, be hopelessly and eternally lost.

[Godlikeness and moral responsibility: Genesis 1:26-27; 2:16-17; Deuteronomy 28:1-2; 30:19; Joshua 24:15; Psalm 8:3-5; Isaiah 1:8-10; Jeremiah 31:29-30; Ezekiel 18:1-4; Micah 6:8; Romans 1:19-20; 2:1-16; 14:7-12; Galatians 6:7-8

Natural inability: Job 14:4; 15:14; Psalms 14:1-4; 51:5; John 3:6a; Romans 3:10-12; 5:12-14, 20a; 7:14-25

Free grace and works of faith: Ezekiel 18:25-26; John 1:12-13; 3:6b; Acts 5:31; Romans 5:6-8, 18; 6:15-16, 23; 10:6-8; 11:22; 1 Corinthians 2:9-14; 10:1-12; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:21-23; 2 Timothy 4:10a; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:12-15; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; James 2:18-22; 2 Peter 1:10-11; 2:20-22]

VIII. Repentance

8. We believe that repentance, which is a sincere and thorough change of the mind in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and a voluntary turning away from sin, is demanded of all who have by act or purpose become sinners against God. The Spirit of God gives to all who will repent the gracious help of penitence of heart and hope of mercy, that they may believe unto pardon and spiritual life.

[2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalms 32:5-6; 51:1-17; Isaiah 55:6-7; Jeremiah 3:12-14; Ezekiel 18:30-32; 33:14-16; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 3:1-14; 13:1-5; 18:9-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30-31; 26:16-18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9]

IX. Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption

9. We believe that justification is the gracious and judicial act of God by which He grants full pardon of all guilt and complete release from the penalty of sins committed, and acceptance as righteous, to all who believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior.

10. We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is that gracious work of God whereby the moral nature of the repentant believer is spiritually quickened and given a distinctively spiritual life, capable of faith, love, and obedience.

11. We believe that adoption is that gracious act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer is constituted a son of God.

12. We believe that justification, regeneration, and adoption are simultaneous in the experience of seekers after God and are obtained upon the condition of faith, preceded by repentance; and that to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

[Luke 18:14; John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; 5:24; Acts 13:39; Romans 1:17; 3:21-26, 28; 4:5-9, 17-25; 5:1, 16-19; 6:4; 7:6; 8:1, 15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 2:16-21; 3:1-14, 26; 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:1, 4-5; Philippians 3:3-9; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 1:9; 3:1-2, 9; 4:7; 5:1, 9-13, 18]

X. Entire Sanctification

13. We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotion to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

It is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.

Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as "Christian perfection," "perfect love," "heart purity," "the baptism with the Holy Spirit," "the fullness of the blessing," and "Christian holiness."

14. We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of growth in grace.

We believe that the grace of entire sanctification includes the impulse to grow in grace. However, this impulse must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in Christlikeness of character and personality. Without such purposeful endeavor one's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.

[Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; John 7:37-39; 14:15-23; 17:6-20; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9; Romans 6:11-13, 19; 8:1-4, 8-14; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-25; Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:17-18, 25-27; Philippians 3:10-15; Colossians 3:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 4:9-11; 10:10-17; 12:1-2; 13:12; 1 John 1:7, 9]

["Christian perfection," "perfect love": Deuteronomy 30:6; Matthew 5:43-48; 22:37-40; Romans 12:9-21; 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 13; Philippians 3:10-15; Hebrews 6:1; 1 John 4:17-18]

"Heart purity": Matthew 5:8; Acts 15:8-9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3

"Baptism with the Holy Spirit": Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9

"Fullness of the blessing": Romans 15:29

"Christian holiness": Matthew 5:1—7:29; John 15:1-11; Romans 12:1—15:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:17—5:20; Philippians 1:9-11; 3:12-15; Colossians 2:20—3:17; 1 Thessalonians

3:13; 4:7-8; 5:23; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; Hebrews 10:19-25; 12:14; 13:20-21; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Peter 1:1-11; 3:18; Jude 20-21]

XI. The Church²

15. We believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

God calls the Church to express its life in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; in worship through the preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, and ministry in His name; by obedience to Christ and mutual accountability.

The mission of the Church in the world is to continue the redemptive work of Christ in the power of the Spirit through holy living, evangelism, discipleship, and service.

The Church is a historical reality, which organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms; exists both as local congregations and as a universal body; sets apart persons called of God for specific ministries. God calls the Church to live under His rule in anticipation of the consummation at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Exodus 19:3; Jeremiah 31:33; Matthew 8:11; 10:7; 16:13-19, 24; 18:15-20; 28:19-20; John 17:14-26; 20:21-23; Acts 1:7-8; 2:32-47; 6:1-2; 13:1; 14:23; Romans 2:28-29; 4:16; 10:9-15; 11:13-32; 12:1-8; 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 7:17; 11:1, 17-33; 12:3, 12-31; 14:26-40; 2 Corinthians 5:11—6:1; Galatians 5:6, 13-14; 6:1-5, 15; Ephesians 4:1-17; 5:25-27; Philippians 2:1-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:19-25; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 13; 2:4-12, 21; 4:1-2, 10-11; 1 John 4:17; Jude 24; Revelation 5:9-10]

XII. Baptism

16. We believe that Christian baptism, commanded by our Lord, is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ, to be administered to believers and declarative of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness.

Baptism being a symbol of the new covenant, young children may be baptized, upon request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training.

Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the choice of the applicant.

[Matthew 3:1-7; 28:16-20; Acts 2:37-41; 8:35-39; 10:44-48; 16:29-34; 19:1-6; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-28; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:18-22]

XIII. The Lord's Supper

17. We believe that the Memorial and Communion Supper instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is essentially a New Testament sacrament, declarative of His sacrificial death, through the merits of which believers have life and salvation and promise of all spiritual blessings in Christ. It is distinctively for those who are prepared for reverent appreciation of its significance, and by it they show forth the Lord's death till He come again. It being the Communion feast, only those who have faith in Christ and love for the saints should be called to participate therein.

[Exodus 12:1-14; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; John 6:28-58; 1 Corinthians 10:14-21; 11:23-32]

XIV. Divine Healing

18. We believe in the Bible doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to seek to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. Providential means and agencies when deemed necessary should not be refused.

[2 Kings 5:1-19; Psalm 103:1-5; Matthew 4:23-24; 9:18-35; John 4:46-54; Acts 5:12-16; 9:32-42; 14:8-15; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; James 5:13-16]

XV. Second Coming of Christ

19. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again; that we who are alive at His coming shall not precede them that are asleep in Christ Jesus; but that, if we are abiding in Him, we

shall be caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air, so that we shall ever be with the Lord.

[Matthew 25:31-46; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:26-28; 2 Peter 3:3-15; Revelation 1:7-8; 22:7-20]

XVI. Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny

20. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, that the bodies both of the just and of the unjust shall be raised to life and united with their spirits—"they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

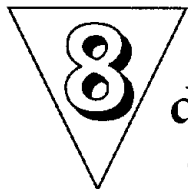
21. We believe in future judgment in which every man shall appear before God to be judged according to his deeds in this life.

22. We believe that glorious and everlasting life is assured to all who savingly believe in, and obediently follow, Jesus Christ our Lord; and that the finally impenitent shall suffer eternally in hell.

[Genesis 18:25; 1 Samuel 2:10; Psalm 50:6; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31; 20:27-38; John 3:16-18; 5:25-29; 11:21-27; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 2:1-16; 14:7-12; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15; 22:1-15]

1. Scripture references are supportive of the Articles of Faith and were placed here by action of the 1976 General Assembly but are not to be considered as part of the Constitutional text.

2. Constitutional changes adopted by the 1989 General Assembly are in the process of ratification by the district assemblies at the time of printing. Where changes are being made, words in *italics* are *new words*, and words in parentheses () are words being deleted.



How are we different from other denominations?

The Church of the Nazarene is one of many different religious bodies operating in today's society. A legitimate question to ask is: Where do we fit in?

Denominational differences can usually be categorized in three areas:

- ▶ **Theology** (What we believe and how it affects the way we live)
- ▶ **Polity** (Our form of church government)
- ▶ **Worship** (Ways we express praise to God)

We have a wide variety of religious groups today largely because of ways different groups of people have addressed the three categories mentioned here.

To help you understand where the Church of the Nazarene stands in relation to other religious groups, let's take a quick look at each of these three areas from our perspective.

THEOLOGY: First of all, within the Christian tradition, we are Protestant. All Protestant beliefs are based upon three basic principles.

* **Justification by Grace Through Faith** (Romans 1:16-17). We cannot earn salvation by good works, but only through faith in Christ's death on the Cross as atonement for our sins.

* **The Priesthood of All Believers** (1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6). Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and man. We do not have to go through a priest but can have a direct relationship with God through Christ.

* **The Authority of Scripture** (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible is God's Word. It is the final authority on matters of salvation and Christian living.

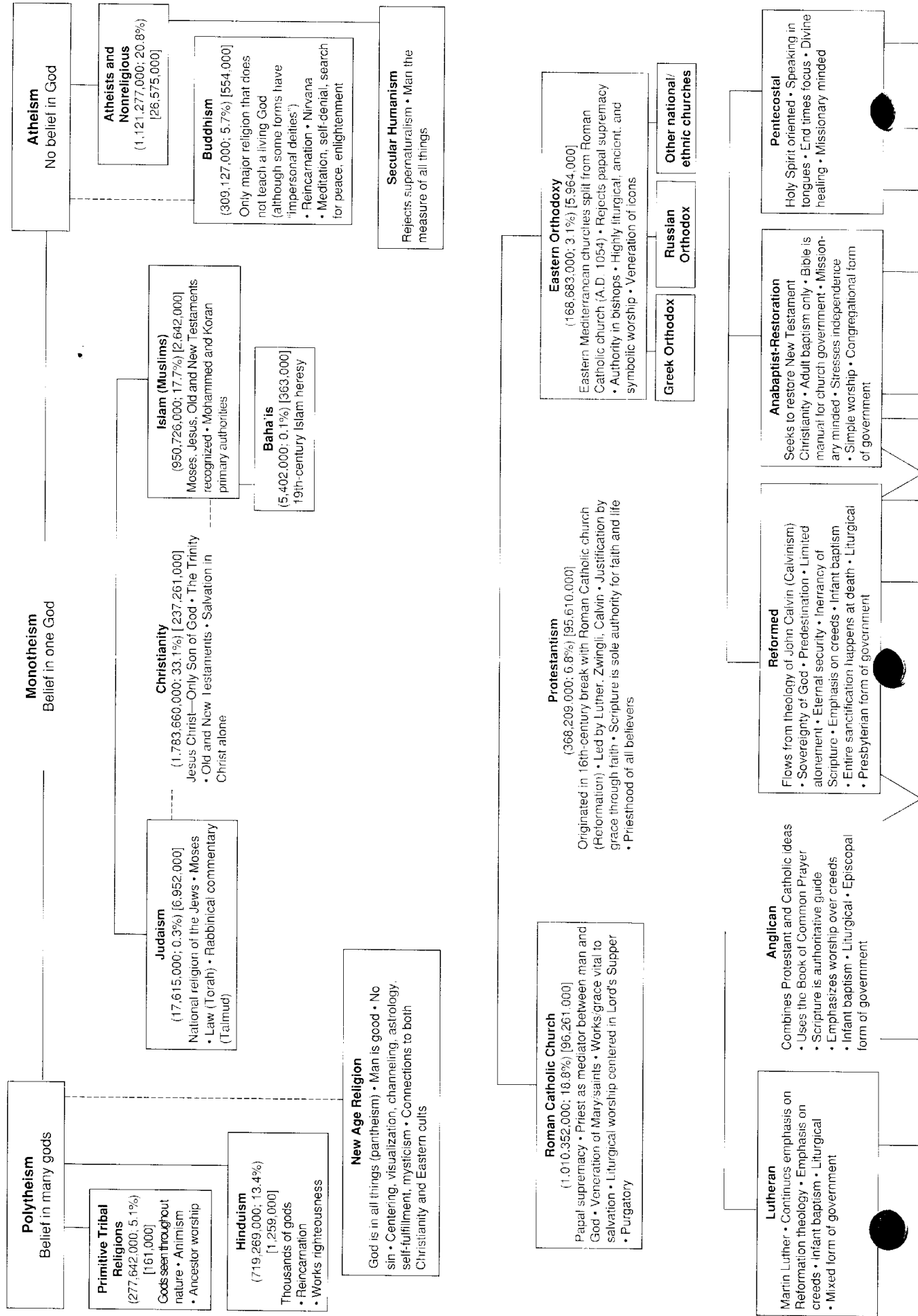
Within the Protestant tradition there are many different denominations, further divided in other areas of belief. Not only is the Church of the Nazarene Protestant, we are also Wesleyan-Arminian. Wesleyan-Arminians hold these distinguishing marks:

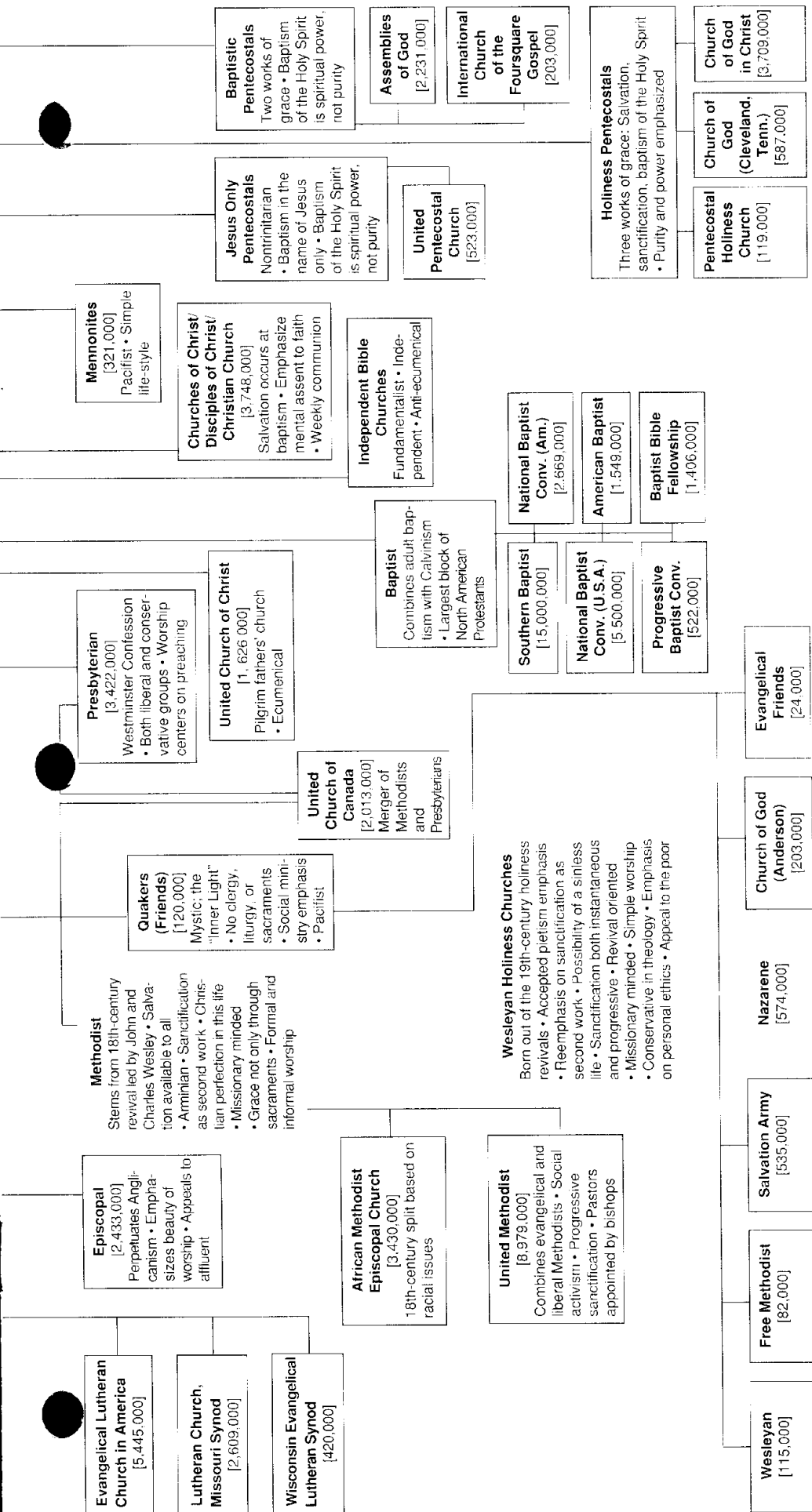
* **Universal Atonement** (John 3:16-17). As Wesleyan-Arminians, we believe Christ made full atonement for all human sin. Christ died for each person's sin. Atonement is available to all but is effective only for those who accept it. This is one area in which we disagree with Calvinism. Calvinistic theology teaches that Jesus' atonement is limited to those predestined by God to be saved.



A Family Tree of Religious Groups

(Numbers in parentheses indicate current number of worldwide adherents and the percent of people in the world who claim this religious group.) [Numbers in brackets indicate North American membership.] Statistics from 1991 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* and 1991 *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year*.





Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism began in the 1800s as a response to liberalism. It stresses five "fundamental" beliefs: (1) Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. (2) Jesus died to pay the price for the sins of man. He died in the place of sinners. (3) God gave the very words of the Bible to its writers. (4) The resurrection of Jesus means that His dead body received new life from God. (5) The second coming of Christ to earth will be premillennial and physical.

Fundamentalism is often thought to be the same as "evangelicalism" and "conservative Christianity." But these forms of Christianity differ in some important ways. Fundamentalists can be found in many different denominations, but are especially prevalent in the Reformed and Anabaptist traditions. As a denomination, Nazarenes, while conservative in theology, are not recognized as fundamentalists because of differences of interpretation on fundamentals 3 and 5.

Cults

Many cults have their roots in Christianity. However, most have strayed from orthodox Christian views at significant points. In common they often have the following: (1) Wrong view of Jesus' humanity or divinity; (2) a central founding, often charismatic figure; (3) authority sources in addition to the Bible.

Personality Cults
 The Way [50,000?]
 The Unification Church (Moonies) [10,000]
 The Church of Scientology [3,500,000]

Cults Emphasizing Wholeness of Body and Spirit
 Unity School of Christianity [200,000]
 Christian Science [100,000]


Eastern Mysticism
 Yoga
 Transcendental Meditation
 Vedanta Society
 Zen
 Krishna Consciousness

Cults Emphasizing the Millennium (End Times)
 Seventh Day Adventists [741,000]
 Jehovah's Witnesses [924,000]
 Mormons (Latter Day Saints) [4,495,000]
 Worldwide Church of God (Armstrong) [85,000]

Evangelical

Evangelical describes churches who stress the need for personal salvation, the doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone, that justified Christians should live holy lives, and the deity of Christ and the authority of the Scriptures.

Today you can find an evangelical emphasis in segments of every main Protestant denomination. However the primary strongholds of evangelicalism are found in Baptist, Pentecostal, Christian, and holiness churches (the last of which the Church of the Nazarene is a part). The Church of the Nazarene is the second largest church in the National Association of Evangelicals.



* **Free Agency** (Romans 2:6-8). Each of us has a free will. God's grace enables us to decide whether or not we will accept Christ. "Man's creation in Godlikeness included the ability to choose between right and wrong, and that thus, he was made morally responsible; . . . We believe that man, though in the possession of the experience of regeneration and entire sanctification, may fall from grace . . . and, unless he repent of his sin, be hopelessly and eternally lost" (*Manual*, Art. VII).

* **Entire Sanctification.** As Nazarenes we believe that a sinless life is possible before death. The Holy Spirit can make in us a "pure heart" so that our love for God and our neighbor is characterized by holiness. "We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of growth in grace" (*Manual*, Art. X, 14).

POLITY: Most church groups accept one or more of the following ways to organize church government. These three types are:

1. Episcopal—Authority is vested solely in the hands of the clergy and elders.
2. Congregational—Authority is given entirely to the members of the local church or congregation.
3. Presbyterian—Authority is shared between clergy and laity.

Our polity is a representative form of government; a combination of the episcopal and congregational principles. We have our overseers called general and district superintendents. Local churches select their own pastors, elect their own officials and delegates, and manage their own property and finances. We have a *Manual* of faith and practice that spells out for us the specific mode and methods of operation for our church—local, district, regional, and international.

WORSHIP: Many different forms of worship expression can be experienced in churches today. It is often this factor that attracts or turns away individuals seeking a church home. In the Church of the Nazarene, worship is of vital importance. Its place in our church program has always received high attention.

Traditionally our church has been more comfortable with an informal, "simple" worship structure, where singing, testimony, open altar, prayer, and preaching have had emphasis. However, there is room in our tradition for a variety of worship experiences. The common denominator remains the high priority that worship services play in each of our churches.

In your Sunday School classes, you'll encounter people who have come from other denominations. The chart on the previous two pages will give you a little help in understanding their backgrounds. For more information, we suggest the *Handbook of Denominations*.

(Remember that in this effort to summarize a denomination's doctrine, we have simplified certain aspects. We realize that God is at work in many different churches. Our goal is simply to help you, the teacher, in assisting your students to understand what the Church of the Nazarene believes in contrast to other denominations.)

9

How else can I be equipped to meet the questions and needs of my students?

Over the years, as the life-styles and needs of Sunday School teachers and their students have changed, Sunday School Ministries has adapted to keep meeting your needs.

At the heart of our resources for the Sunday School lies our complete line of Sunday School curriculum products. It is here that we feel we can best and most effectively help impact Nazarenes. The Sunday School has weekly, consistent, and in-depth opportunities to impact the spiritual life of an individual from the cradle to end of life. With this kind of unique opportunity to reach and inform our students, it is vitally important that the curricular resources used in our classes be of the highest quality and of the clearest doctrinal position. We have each chosen to belong to that one religious body, among the many that are available, that is called the Church of the Nazarene. We want our Sunday School classes to reflect that decision in the way the Bible and life are explored.

Because Sunday School curriculum is so critical to our church, our leaders decided many years ago to produce our own curriculum line, created, written, and edited by professionals who have a sympathetic ear and eye to our particular theological and ethical emphases.

We are proud of our WordAction curriculum line of resources, not because they are ours, but because they unashamedly proclaim the dynamic and bold assertions of our Wesleyan-Arminian heritage like no other curriculum line has or does.

WordAction Curriculum is designed to help you in several ways.

1. *WordAction* thought-provoking curriculum is focused on Scripture and brings the Bible to life for your students.

2. The carefully sequenced curriculum system helps students develop a comprehensive understanding of the Bible and its meaning for their lives.

3. *WordAction* is built upon the doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene. Several publishers offer good, evangelical curriculum. However, because many of these publishers must appeal to a wide variety of denominational positions, they must in turn produce a rather "generic" curriculum. In some cases these publishers in fact print materials that contradict what we believe. In other cases, emphases important to us are necessarily ignored. Most generic publishers assume a "Calvinistic consensus" of Christian doctrine.

The Church of the Nazarene has long produced curriculum that is thoroughly Wesleyan and builds a foundation for our holiness doctrines. This takes students beyond the surface of Christianity and grounds them in the Word. Today, the Church of the Nazarene is the world's largest producer of holiness curriculum.

4. *WordAction* offers curriculum designed for every age-group from infants to seniors.

5. *WordAction* provides in-depth teaching resources with all curriculum.

6. From *Together Time* (twos and threes) to *Standard* (adult), Sunday School take-home papers reaffirm classroom lessons.

TRAINING RESOURCES

An important part of our resourcing to you includes a wide variety of training opportunities. Ongoing teacher education is a hallmark of our curriculum strategy.

Some of the ways you can become better equipped to teach include:

"Resource" Magazine

Each quarter, *Resource* offers practical, bite-sized articles especially designed to help busy teachers be effective in all areas of ministry.

Insights Booklets

Each *Insight* booklet presents 16 to 32 pages of practical instruction on timely, specialized topics related to the work of Sunday School Ministries.

Insights Videos

Catering to the age-groups, these entertaining and informative videos are perfect for new teachers or for those who want to brush up their basic skills.

CLT (Continuing Lay Training)

Sunday School Ministries also provides CLT courses designed to help teachers, staff members, and laymen develop their faith. Through home study or church group studies, you can earn CLT credits and certificates.

Local, District, Regional, National Training Events

Opportunities to attend training events are a regular agenda item in all of our churches.

10 How is the Sunday School related to other Sunday School Ministries programs?

Sunday School is the core of Sunday School Ministries. Yet Sunday School Ministries is responsible for more than just Sunday School activities. The entire scope of church-related ministries, from Vacation Bible School, to Bible quizzing, to family and marriage, to a host of other important ministry avenues for all ages, fall under the responsibility of Sunday School Ministries. (For a complete survey of program resources refer to the annual Sunday School Ministries catalog.)

You as a Sunday School teacher are not isolated in your teaching role. Many of you fill other roles in the ministry of your church. The important thing to remember is that no matter what avenue of ministry we are involved in, we are often working with the same body of students. Because we have opportunities to impact our students from such a variety of ministry angles, it is important that what we do in the Sunday School is coordinated with what we do in other areas of the church. Otherwise we can confuse our students and contradict ourselves, leading us to less than successful ministry experiences. Sunday School is one key component of a much larger ministry strategy that encompasses virtually all of life.

"The object of the [Sunday] school shall be the promotion of Christian life and character through the devout and diligent study of the Word of God."

—Manual, 1923

As you continue to meet this goal, we in Sunday School Ministries applaud you, thank God for you, and pray for you. You, the unsung heroes of our church, continue to be the basis upon which a good portion of this church is built.

And not only are you building this church and its outreach, but as you touch hearts and minds, your ripples of influence spread and touch countless lives for all eternity.

unday School, its place of service in the life of the local church and its absolute necessity as a means of grace, is hereby underscored once again by this Board of General Superintendents. We are asking the entire church, at district and local levels, to review the emphasis and importance of this agency. Where emphasis is lacking, there must be a strengthening of the program.

The verdict is now in. Sunday morning worship attendance cannot compensate for the vital role the Sunday School plays in contributing to the growth of the church. The Sunday School is not just a proven vehicle for training and discipleship, but is indeed an evangelistic outreach arm of the church, an arm we cannot afford to do without. We urge our people the world over to renewal of emphasis and support of our Sunday Schools.

—The Board of General Superintendents

Go and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

—Matthew 28:19 (NIV)