

14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPORT ▪ Chico, CA ▪ May 1, 2020

Rev. Steven R. Scott, District Superintendent

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## IN THE FAITH



Steve & Debbie Scott

February 2020

**WITH DEEP GRATITUDE** I bring my 14<sup>th</sup> report as District Superintendent of the Sacramento District, now in my 32<sup>nd</sup> year as an ordained elder in the Church of the Nazarene. I'm humbled every day by the profound blessing of knowing and serving Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, and I am so grateful for the honor of serving with a leadership team that includes the following colleagues and friends:

...the District Office staff of Rev. Mike Havens/ District Administrator for 12 ½ yrs. as District Treasurer and coordinator for various district events and facilities; Kaitlin Peoples/Executive Assistant for 5 ½ yrs. as coordinator of district office procedures, editor of all district publications, and assistant with various duties of the District Superintendent; and Jessica Moreno/Administrative Assistant for 3 yrs. as support for district office operations and logistical arrangements. Mike, Kaitlin & Jessica all serve with a great spirit and a deep love for the church. I am honored to serve with them!

...to the District Advisory Board: Dr. Stephen Campbell/Redding First; Rev. Steve Dickerson/Placerville; Dr. Mark Lehman/Sutter Creek; Rev. Mike Peoples/Roseville Journey; Rev. Joe Sturgeon/Susanville; Mark Bennett/Stockton First; Bob Capp/Auburn Parkside; Gary Greeno/Stockton Horizon; and Joe McCoy/Oroville.

... to Rev. Austin Bender/ Nazarene Youth International President; Rev. Darlene Franks/Sunday School & Discipleship Ministries Chair; Joanne Sturgeon/ Nazarene Missions International President; Dr. Leon Skinner/District Institute of Ministry Director; Rev. Ron Zimmer/Summer Camps Ministries Director; Cathy Scharf/Children's Ministries Director; Dr. Earl Gillett/District Secretary; the Ministerial Studies & Credentials Boards (listed by name in their respective reports); and all the members of the SDMI Board, NMI Council, NYI Council, and our summer camp directors (listed by name in their respective reports).

...to all the Senior/Lead Pastors, Associate Pastoral Staff and spouses who faithfully serve the communities of the Sacramento District.

...to my wife Debbie, our sons Robert & David, for their love and support; and my parents, Robert & Carolyn Scott, who tell me they pray for me by name every day!

**Please join me in expressing our gratitude to this amazing group of people!**



**DURING THE 2019-2020** year my responsibilities as D.S. included the honor and joy of:

- ❖ Meeting with 154 pastors/ministry leaders for various issues & needs,
- ❖ Visiting and interacting on 32 church campuses on the district,
- ❖ Preaching in 10 worship services,
- ❖ Participating in 19 district board/committee/council meetings,
- ❖ Conducting 10 Church/Pastoral Reviews,
- ❖ Chairing the pastoral search process in 7 churches,
- ❖ Participating in 29 Church Board & Congregational Meetings,
- ❖ Resourcing 4 Lifelong Learning gatherings for Pastoral leaders,
- ❖ Serving as a member of the Point Loma Nazarene University Board of Trustees,
- ❖ Officiating in one wedding ceremony,
- ❖ Officiating in one memorial service, and
- ❖ having a close and personal relationship with my laptop, cell phone, and steering wheel!



In the past year I participated in the following events for Lifelong Learning and personal development: District Superintendent Leadership Development (Vancouver, B.C., Canada); District Superintendent Leadership Conference (Daytona Beach, Florida); PLNU Ministerial Candidate Workshop (San Diego); Disaster Response Training/Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (Palo Alto, CA); Nazarene Youth Congress (Phoenix, AZ); ILI Discipleship Conference (Gardnerville, NV).

**MY ONGOING VISION FOR US AS A DISTRICT** of local churches is for us to affirm that we are the literal presence of Christ in our communities. On the day of His ascension Jesus said, “*you will receive power to be my witnesses.*” Every year we affirm our desire to be devoted members of the body of Christ, inspired by the Great Commission. I encourage you to insist on these core understandings of what we do in our communities, engaging in ministries that result in:

- **newborn believers** who are being delivered and disciplined in our churches;
- **growing believers** who are being baptized in our churches by the profession of their faith;
- **maturing believers** who are uniting with the community as devoted followers of Jesus;
- **at least 10%** of annual giving committed to the regional & global mission of the church;
- **future plans** to partner in the planting of new churches in our local mission areas;
- **an ongoing**, definable link to our local communities through outreach & service.

**WE CURRENTLY HAVE 48** active organized churches (plus 4 inactive organized churches, 2 of which are being leased by Churches other than Nazarene), **6** Church Type Missions, **8** parented congregations for second languages, and **1** new start for a total of **63 active congregations**. In February of 2020, our most recent **new start church** was launched through Sacramento Liberty Towers Church, as Liberty Towers North in Roseville, at the previous site of Roseville Journey Church. I am grateful for the vision and leadership of Pastor Terry Schneider (Liberty Towers), and layperson Dan Elliott, Jr. for envisioning this new congregation.

**AS WE REVIEW THIS PAST YEAR’S VITAL SIGNS,** I am always mindful that “numbers” are “people,” and people matter. Because people matter, we challenge and equip ourselves to create dynamic worship experiences and effective local ministries to equip people to grow up in Christ in every way possible. So, here’s some numbers about people on the Sacramento District in the past year:

<b>Sacramento District Comparative Vital Signs</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b><u>Discipleship/Sunday &amp; Any Day Enrollment</u></b> <i>This is evidence that we are <b>CONNECTING</b> with people and nurturing relationships with them. These are live connections!</i>	29,840*	24,520

*Sometimes referred to as the Responsibility List, these are supposed to be people we know or have met through the ministries of the church, with whom we are nurturing relationships through ongoing interest and involvement in their life.*

<b><u>Discipleship/Sunday &amp; Any Day Attendance</u></b> <i>This indicates that we are <b>DISCIPLING</b> people, in the Word, any group, any day, growing in faith, equipped to evangelize &amp; disciple others.</i>	8,511	8,513
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*What do we do in Discipleship? We help people establish a life with Jesus Christ through God’s Word. We teach the surrender of self rather than the world practice of self-obsession. We teach hope as the default attitude of life in Christ.*

*From 2016-2020, 20 of our churches grew in discipleship, and 27 declined in discipleship. With all of today’s personal and remote ways to connect, your church needs to find inspiration and vitality through its discipleship ministries. If your church has been in decline, this Yearbook can identify some churches who can help your church revitalize true biblical discipleship.*

<b><u>Weekly Worship</u></b> <i>This is an event for <b>ENRICHING</b> people; it is central to life. This must be a experience of vitality and adoration of God as we gather faithfully.</i>	10,081	9,885†
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*One of the first things in the Bible that was considered **not good** was about man being alone. In 2020 we have experienced the undesirability of being unable to meet for worship as the body of Christ. However, our gatherings are not just to be with those we know, but to bring evangelized people and growing believers together as worshipping people.*

*As a District we have declined in worship now for four years; a difference of 1,463 less people in worship from our highest ever recorded worship in 2016. From 2016-2020, 18 churches grew in worship, and 31 declined in worship. From my perspective, one word: alarming.*

*We’ve done well attracting people to worship, my prayer is that more and more people will be attracted to **worship** faithfully and passionately, and that your church will be revived as a setting in which people dynamically **EXPERIENCE** the presence and the Word of God.*

<b>Church Membership</b> <i>This indicates that people are <b>EMBRACING</b> the mission, the threshold of a mobilized church. Most people commit to something that really matters.</i>	11,392**	10,757
<b>New Members by Profession of Faith</b> <i>This is evidence that we are <b>BUILDING</b> a covenant community. It is a next step for growing in faith &amp; spiritual development beyond baptism.</i>	467	567
<b>Total Conversions – born again!</b>	1,189	1,046
<b>Total Baptisms – declaring faith in Jesus Christ!</b>	507	546
<b>Total Combined Giving</b> by the Sacramento District local churches. <i>An encouraging indication of stewardship, discovered and expressed.</i>	17,811,190 <sup>00*</sup>	17,496,019 <sup>00**</sup>

\* Highest ever recorded on Sac District

\*\* Second highest ever recorded on the Sac District

† Indicates FOURTH year in decline

In reflecting on the above Vital Signs, I am grateful that even in the midst of apparent spiritual and perceived cultural indifferences to Jesus Christ, many of our local church communities are experiencing the dynamic presence of God. If your church community is not fulfilling the potential of the Gospel, I encourage you to be nurtured from the churches in this Yearbook who are clearly in a season of vitality.

### ***THE CHURCH IS BEING CALLED AS MUCH AS EVER TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH***

There are three retail food businesses that always have long drive-thru lines. People will wait in their cars, sometimes for up to 30 minutes, because the product of those businesses apparently is just that good. You know them, I'm talking about: Starbucks, In 'n Out, and.....wait for it.....Chick-fil-A. What are the three common ingredients of those three food service all stars? Beans, a burger, and chicken; driven by reasonable prices and an insatiable desire to consume food.

And then there's the church of Jesus Christ, often getting mixed reviews. It's a place of passion for many who deeply miss it during times of stay-at-home orders; an option for those who haven't yet discovered the reality of Jesus; and it's a mystery to many who remain blinded by the god of this world.

In recent weeks we have had the priceless opportunity to literally livestream the church to the world. A lot more people now know that the church is real, the message is profound, and that Jesus really is the way - the truth - and the life. We have learned that there is a reason to continue in the faith; not just to sustain the existence of the church, but to be faithful to the call of Jesus in our lives, as His Church.

God's Word defines what it means to continue in the faith in Colossians 1:22, *"yet He has now reconciled you in His body through death, to present you before Him holy, blameless and beyond reproach—23 if you continue in the faith firmly established & steadfast; not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard..."* From this foundation, God will build His church.

To continue in the faith assumes: a starting point, an embrace, a declaration, a devotion, an endurance, a resolve to be alive in Christ. This is dynamic, kinetic, and hopefully, contagious to a sinful, fallen world.

To continue in the faith is not a passive existence. It is reliant on the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Without this empowering, it becomes easy to think that people don't want this; that there isn't a hunger in today's world for a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit. If that's your conviction, you are living in your own place of diminished faith and compromise – God didn't call you to that – you allowed yourself to go there. To continue in the faith is the heart of what it means to be an evangelical, holiness church.

### **WHAT SUSTAINS AND ENERGIZES US TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH?**

1) Proclaiming the truth by literally walking with Jesus, instead of making Jesus follow us; 2) having our conscience captivated and our personality transformed; 3) going beyond “*that's how I am*” to “*that's what God has done in me!*”; and 4) having a community identity as the church – not just because “*I love my church...*” but because “*We intentionally love our community and our neighborhood...*”

Imagine being the church, so inspired, courageous, and convinced that the saving grace of Jesus Christ is the will of God for **all people**. Imagine being a church that devotes itself to proclaim this truth, envisioning the ability of God's Spirit to do His work in anyone He brings into our life. People of faith can't dwell on what the church most likely won't be able to do for certain people groups of our day; that is a spiritually anemic view for a disciple of Jesus Christ. Instead, as people of faith, we pray, believe, and envision what God **will** do as we give Him our lives for His glory. Whether your church is newly formed, or has existed for decades, this is the time for your church to be a presence in your community that:

- lovingly, truthfully, and confidently proclaims THE good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ,
- reaches out to, loves and honors any generation of our day,
- becomes a prominent civic influence through community partnerships and advocacy groups;
- duplicates and plants itself into communities and neighborhoods in need of the body of Christ.

Whether it's through worship, various ministries, social networks, acts of compassion, small groups, or large gatherings, I implore you as the church, to **Continue** IN THE FAITH, true to the anointing of God from which the prophet Isaiah proclaimed a relevant and liberating word for today's church:

*<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to **everyone**. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,<sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. (Isaiah 61)*

Respectfully & gratefully submitted,  
Steven R. Scott

22 yet He has now reconciled you in His body through death, to present you before Him holy, blameless and beyond reproach—  
23 if you continue in the faith firmly established & steadfast; not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard...