REDEFINING DISTRICTS: FULFILLING A NEW MODEL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE[1]

Reuben L. Lillie and Charles L. Perabeau
Olivet Nazarene University

> We are also very glad to be able to announce to you that Drs. Widney and Bresee have arranged to associate themselves together with such Christian work, especially evangelistic and city mission work, and the spreading of the doctrine and experience of Christian holiness.
>
> —First Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles, "Notice of First Meeting," 1895

Introduction

What is the point of districts in the first place? The idea of organizing the Church of the Nazarene (CotN) into districts predates the denomination, but the impulse behind the idea often goes unrecognized. According to the 1907 "Basis of Union" between the Pacific Coast–based CotN and the Atlantic Coast–based Association of Pentecostal Churches of America (the first of 15 mergers thus far that has constituted the denomination), the unique blend of episcopal and congregational polity was designed, on the one hand, "to foster and care for churches already established and . . . to organize and encourage the organizing of churches everywhere," and on the other hand, "not [to] interfere with the independent action of [any] fully organized [local] church."[2] In other words, from the denomination's earliest days, districts were not meant as regulatory agencies with authority *over* local churches, but rather as resource agencies *for* the local churches within their bounds, specifically to establish a larger, healthier network of local churches there. In keeping with this primordial impetus to advance the church rather than contain it, we wish to use this essay to cast a bold vision: one for reorganizing districts in the CotN—specifically their names and bounds—better to fulfill its mission "to make Christlike disciples in the nations" as we move forward into the middle of the twenty-first century.

---

[1]We first presented an abridged version of this project at the 55th annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society, held at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO, March 6, 2020, under the title "Dissident Districts: Developing a New Model of Administrative Boundaries in the Church of the Nazarene." The title was intentionally provocative in the spirit of the conference theme, "'Powers and Principalities': Christian Complicity, Confession, and Confrontation." We have since retitled the paper: first changing "Dissident Districts" to "Redefining Districts," as a more accurate representation of our research aimed at uplifting the missional definition of a district adopted by the Twenty-seventh General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene in 2009; then also changing the word "Developing" in the subtitle to "Fulfilling," as a deeper expression of the work already begun in adopting this newer missional definition, yet which remains largely *unfulfilled* until the names and bounds of our administrative entities are redrawn to reflect—and truthfully enact—such a missional definition. We have also updated the population statistics to reflect the latest estimates as of July 2020.

[2]*Manual: 1908*, p. 18–19.

Redefining the Purpose of Districts

Strangely enough, as persistent as the *idea* of having districts has been, the CotN has not always been as clear about what the *purpose* of a district is. The earliest mention in the 1903 Los Angeles *Manual* simply enumerates four powers of district assemblies:

> The District Assemblies shall have power [1] to elect to Elder's orders: [2] recognize the orders of ministers coming to us from other churches: [3] hear reports from the churches and Sunday schools within their borders: [4] *plan for the work, and attend to such other business as may be found necessary for its advancement*.[3]

By 1915, the united church's *Manual* contained the language which came closest to defining the basic function of a district: "To consider and care for the entire work of the Church within its bounds."[4] For nearly a century, this buried line item was the only official language suggesting the purpose of a district. Finally, in 2009, the Twenty-seventh General Assembly adopted the denomination's first formal definition of a *district* to mean "an entity made up of interdependent local churches organized to facilitate the mission of each local church through mutual support, the sharing of resources, and collaboration."[5] The resolution came from the Eurasia Region who dubbed this a "missional definition," as derived from the "Core Values" of the CotN set forth by the Board of General Superintendents in 2001.[6]

In the past, districts have readily assented to this missional *impetus*. Yet, as history reveals, the location of district boundaries and districts' attitudes toward them have proved just as prone to *impede* the mission of the church—both locally and globally. Locally, many districts are no longer made up of the proper grouping of local churches (even if they were at another point in time) to have the greatest impact, especially where metropolitan areas are concerned. And globally, almost all existing district boundaries reinforce geopolitical divisions rather than prioritize people and how they move about in the present age.

With this missional definition now in hand, however, the challenge the CotN faces today is that its existing system of districts is not poised to "facilitate the mission of each local church," neither in theory nor in practice. Nowhere is this luxation clearer than where existing administrative boundaries fall and how infrequently members from different districts manage to partner in light of—or in spite of—those boundaries. Which is to say, the current map may have somewhat positioned the church to do so at one time in the past, but both the lines themselves and the current process by which they are drawn and revised (or not) hinder more than they help the missional objectives of the church today. And these hindrances are clearest in North America, where district structures have been formalized the longest and, incidentally, with the least comprehensive, cooperative, or long-term strategy for making Christlike disciples across the

---

[3]*Manual: 1903*, p. 36, emphasis added.
[4]*Manual: 1915*, p. 49.
[5]*Manual: 2009–2013*, para. 200.
[6]See "Core Values: Christian, Holiness, Missional" (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene, 2001), https://www.whdl.org/core-values-church-nazarene-main-full-length-videos-and-core-values-booklets.

continent. Indeed, what the church otherwise does instinctively in faraway lands often feels "foreign" in North America.

Discerning the Process for Creating Districts

In order to understand the problem which many existing administrative boundaries pose to fulfilling the church's mission, particularly in North America, it is important to review how the current districts took shape, not simply where their boundaries fall. The purpose of a district seems clear enough, but the processes have evolved significantly from which districts were first meant to be created and then later to realign their boundaries to the mission over time.

The 1908 *Manual* does not specify a process for establishing new districts immediately following the Pilot Point merger. However, the new denomination's first articles on General Superintendents state, "They may appoint a District Superintendent in a newly organized or a missionary district."[7] When read in context with the aforementioned "Basis of Union," this lack of specifics suggests that the responsibility to create districts fell squarely on the general superintendency. Perhaps the General Superintendents also consulted an unnamed advisory committee like the kind P. F. Bresee and J. P. Widney relied upon in Los Angeles as early as 1903.[8] In any case, the fledgling denomination was resolved not to over-legislative itself. The CotN was growing too fast in that first generation's estimation to nail down too much too soon.[9] They learned as they went. To remove any doubt, by the time of the Third General Assembly in 1911, among a list of committee recommendations for adjusting existing district boundaries, we find "the formation of . . . new Districts be left with the General Superintendent."[10]

The 1919 *Manual* suggests what appears on the surface to be a more synergistic turn in the relationship between general and district administration: "The bounds and name of a Church District shall be such as shall be indicated by the General Assembly or by the Districts involved, with the final approval of the General Superintendents having jurisdiction."[11] Districts now had the express opportunity for input, but the authority still rested with the superintendency. Nonetheless, this slight shift marks what has become the prevailing trend: one favoring district sovereignty over global mission, at least in terms of districts within the United States and Canada.

In lieu of taking the space to itemize the decades of incremental resolutions and amendments since 1919, it is more pressing to address the root problem with the present process. Although the rationale for adopting a superintendency in the first place, according to the "Basis of Union," is to organize the church, many districts have since confused their role with that of local congregations. That is, districts often expect (or are treated as if they expect) the general administration—or any leadership outside one's own district, for that matter—will "not interfere"

---

[7]*Manual: 1908*, p. 47.
[8]*Manual: 1903*, p. 37.
[9]cf. "Address to the Church" in *Manual: 1908*, p. 9–10.
[10]*Manual: 1911*, p. 73.
[11]*Manual: 1919*, p. 49.

with *their* jurisdiction. In theory, it is still the responsibility of the General Assembly to "organize the membership of the church into districts."[12] The reality, however, is that all too often "district assemblies are in disagreement"[13] at some crucial point about how they should be organized. Therefore, boundaries go unadjusted, the status quo is maintained, and the mission suffers. The "final approval" of the General Assembly to organize the church has been relegated into a proverbial rubber stamp far too late within a largely district-initiated and district-approved order or operations, again, specifically among the Phase 3 districts in the USA/Canada Region.

In truth, no *Manual* or *Journal of the General Assembly* can reveal what becomes all too apparent from anecdotal evidence. We need not air anyone's dirty laundry or coax out sour memories. We need only to look at the current map of districts in the USA and Canada to acknowledge something odd took place, for example, in the histories of the districts in California, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, or Texas. Then, by looking back over the policies, we can notice how the conditions were overripe for such oddities. The story typically plays out that someone in church leadership aspires to "realign"[14] two or more adjacent districts' boundaries for the sake of the mission. But, along the way, a handful of members of one of the district assemblies involved objects or hesitates, and inevitably plans fail. Worse, in the absence of a regional office or national boards like those of other world areas, the USA/Canada Region lacks the infrastructure to develop more comprehensive strategies invited by *Manual* para. 200.3. In practice, two districts may consider a merger on occasion; or perhaps the district superintendents from within a state may chat, maybe even with leadership in a neighboring state. But seldom, if ever, does the bold vision-casting take place to radically reimagine the districts of North America toward a renewed sense of mission at scale.

Sadly, although many district boundaries in the United States coincide with state lines (see following section, "The Dismemberment of North America"), the role of district administration has been functionally confused with the Tenth Amendment to the US Constitution. Which is to say, the idea of "state's rights" is fundamentally incompatible with district administration as envisioned in service to the global mission of the church. While the church may assent to this distinction, we do not make a habit of acting like such a distinction exists, or at least matters—not in the USA/Canada Region anyhow.

We (Charles and Reuben) do not mean to suggest that districts should not have any input when it comes to determining their administrative boundaries. Of course, they should. There is tremendous value in praying together and developing strategies for advancing the gospel. (After all, no one knows an area as well as the locals.) We do mean, however, to call out a grave shortcoming in polity—or at least the popular application of it—which has created the conditions for routinely stalling the mission when the opportunity presents itself to realign existing district boundaries (or else which keep the opportunities from presenting themselves at all). Measures that were adopted in the spirit of checks and balances, like a two-thirds vote by each district

[12]*Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 200.
[13]*Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 200.5.
[14]*Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 200.3.

involved in a potential merger,[15] are dangerously close to conflicts of interest. The idea makes enough sense for mergers, but the church also acts as if it is the necessary hurdle in order to propose boundary changes of any kind, when that is not the case. Even so, the existing process for adjusting district boundaries expects and invites far too much district approval and input, but it does not involve enough initiative and influence on the part of the general (i.e., regional or national) administration whose very existence in the CotN rests in effectively organizing the church. It is past due for the USA/Canada Region to begin acting more like its counterparts worldwide—and for the districts of USA/Canada to permit the regional, national, and field leadership to do so—by fashioning a thorough plan for redefining administrative boundaries as we know them in service to our common mission.

The CotN rightly celebrates its theoretically nonhierarchical form of government. *But a district is not a local church.* A district was never meant to be autonomous in the same way our denominational leadership has so consistently defended each local church's relative congregational autonomy to act in the best interest of its surrounding community. On the contrary, when districts are at their best, they act as an extension of the general administration to help their "interdependent" local churches clarify and advance the mission for their common mission field. Therefore, districts *must* depend on general administration in discerning with which local churches they ought to be collaborating in order to strengthen existing churches and organize new ones. The all too prevalent problem, however, which inhibits far too many districts from realizing this shared purpose, is that the boundaries of their mission field are wrong.

The Dismemberment of North America

To illustrate the immensity of the problem with current district boundaries, consider, for example, the 50 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the United States of America as recognized by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Using census data, the OMB currently delineates 384 MSAs as those with at least one core of 50,000 or more in population, "plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties."[16] In other words, conversations about MSAs do not merely discuss cities somehow at the expense of rural populations. On the contrary, discussing MSAs inherently involves both urban and rural populations within a given area. In fact, rural populations within MSAs subsist precisely because of their proximity to more densely populated areas which, in turn, depend upon the resources and residents of those surrounding suburban and rural communities. [17] In fact, MSAs highlight the symbiotic relationship between people and the land which a truly missional district embodies.

---

[15]*Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 200.4.

[16]White House Office of Management and Budget. "2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas." *Federal Register* 75, no. 125 (June 28, 2010): 37246–52. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2010-06-28/pdf/2010-15605.pdf.

[17]cf. *Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 200.3.

By our best estimates as we enter the 2020 census,[18] there are 328,239,523 people living in the United States of America. Of those, 180,591,051 live in the 50 largest MSAs (55% of the total US population). Twenty of those MSAs fall within the bounds of a single district in the CotN (see following section, "Concerning Ethno-Linguistic-Specific Districts"). The other 30 MSAs are split between two or more adjacent districts. These figures, however, can give the false impression that we are better off than at first glance. Those 20 MSAs which belong to a single district represent about 59.8 million (or roughly 18%) of the US population. By contrast, the other 30 MSAs whose populations are divided between two or more districts constitute over 120.8 million (37%) of the entire US population. The data reveal fifty percent more of the MSAs represent twice as many people, indicating how much our current district boundaries *infringe* upon our largest metropolitan areas instead of fully *embracing* them. If the purpose of a district is to resource local churches together toward mission, and if our local efforts are divided for well over a third of the country's population, then is it any wonder why we are having trouble taking root in US cities?

In an overwhelming number of cases, the very groups the CotN came into existence to serve—and whom we (Charles and Reuben) believe should be of the same district in service to that mission—are separated by arbitrary lines (but hardly innocuous ones!) which are congruent with preexisting geopolitical boundaries. Within the United States and Canada, boundaries all but exclusively fall on state, provincial, and county lines. In select cases, further abstractions such as longitude and latitude appear. Others rely on artificial barriers such as highways and railroads to separate one district from another. A few lines contour with mountain ranges. But what we find strange is how so few lines seem to have been drawn deliberately regarding how people interact with the land and with each other. The early Nazarene leaders may have used state lines, for example, as a consciously temporary convenience measure for a growing denomination in a developing nation. Maintaining those lines in 2020, however, and attempting to achieve some semblance of the collaborative mission the church says it has, is like trying to unite East and West Germany after the fall of the Soviet Union, but insisting we keep the Berlin Wall intact. The CotN cannot have its missional definition for districts and leave its current district boundaries untouched.

Considering the 50 largest MSAs again, all but three of the 20 whose inhabitants have the privilege of residing within the same district only have that privilege because that MSA is also within a single state. Two of the three MSAs are in New England. Which is to say, with the exception of Boston–Cambridge–Newton (№ 10) and Providence–Warwick (№ 38), the only other multistate MSA of the 50 largest MSAs which is encompassed by a single district is Kansas City (№ 31). Imagine any other major US city which is either remotely close to a state border or is in a state with more than one district, and that metropolitan area is on the list of 30.

[18]US Census Bureau, "Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas Population Totals and Components of Change: 2010-2019," accessed June 25, 2020, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-total-metro-and-micro-statistical-areas.html.

Although district lines have always been drawn to include the broader New York City vicinity in New Jersey and Connecticut, the New York–Newark–Jersey City MSA (№1), nonetheless, is split between three districts. Chicago–Naperville–Elgin (№ 3) is split between four districts (or five if you include Berrien County, Michigan). Likewise, Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington (№ 4), Washington–Arlington–Alexandria (№ 8), and Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington (№ 6) is each divided between two districts—and that only rounds out the top-ten largest MSAs! Minneapolis–St. Paul–Bloomington (№ 14), St. Louis (№ 20), Charlotte–Concord–Gastonia (№ 23), Portland–Vancouver–Hillsboro (№ 25), Pittsburgh (№ 27), Cincinnati (№ 30), Virginia Beach–Norfolk–Newport News (№ 37), Memphis (№ 43), Louisville/Jefferson County (№ 45), and New Orleans (№ 46), all but four of them larger than Kansas City, are divided between districts (educational fields too, in some cases!) simply because their cities are on or near one or more state boundaries.

In turn, Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim (№ 2), San Francisco–Oakland–Berkeley (№ 12), Riverside–San Bernardino–Ontario (№ 13), Sacramento–Roseville–Folsom (№ 26), Columbus (№ 32), Indianapolis–Carmel–Anderson (№ 33), Cleveland–Elyria (№ 34), San Jose–Sunnyvale–Santa Clara (№ 35), Nashville–Davidson–Murfreesboro–Franklin (№ 36), Oklahoma City (№ 41), and Birmingham–Hoover (№ 49), cities which are otherwise well inside their respective state boundaries, are divided between at least two and as many as four districts of the CotN.

Becoming a Truly Global Holiness Church

But we must not stop at state lines. If we wish to be a truly global holiness church and not to settle upon merely being an international federation, then we cannot overlook populations—especially areas with over one million residents—who live in what are called *transborder agglomerations*. To continue our analysis of North America, four of the 50 largest MSAs neighbor either the USA–Canada or USA–Mexico border. Detroit–Warren–Dearborn (№ 14) is the largest with 4.3 million people on the US side alone, and over 5.7 million total including Windsor, Ontario. Seattle–Tacoma–Bellevue (№ 15), an area of 3.9 million residents, is adjacent to Metro Vancouver with over 3 million of its own. San Diego–Chula Vista–Carlsbad (№ 17) is home to 3.3 million in the United States, and over 5.1 million total including Tijuana, Mexico. And the 1.1 million residents of the Buffalo–Cheektowaga MSA (№ 50) are among more than ten times as many—10.4 million—who live in the megalopolis known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe incorporating the Toronto and Hamilton vicinities in Ontario. Beyond the 50 largest MSAs in the United States, another 5.9 million live in metropolitan areas whose primary urban center lies across the US–Mexico border: El Paso–Juarez (2.5 million), Laredo–Nuevo Laredo (775,000), Reynosa–McAllen (1.5 million), and Matamoros–Brownsville (1.1 million). Together these border areas are home to over 29.7 million people—a sum equal to 3% of the entire US population, 6% of the total Mexican population, and 36% of the total Canadian population. This figure betrays the popular narrative depicting miles of open space either to warrant or reject building a physical barrier between nations.

Regardless of one's political leanings with respect to national border security, however, while there may be other legitimate logistical concerns which come with the territory of spanning an international border, there is no *missional* reason why these cities should be in separate jurisdictions within a denomination who considers itself to be a global expression of the Body of

Christ. If we can justify navigating the legal and other logistical challenges between Kansas and Missouri in order to keep 2.1 million people together, then surely we can do it for the nearly 143 million people in North America who live on a district boundary that has drawn and quartered the metropolitan areas they call home (a peculiarly apt metaphor for the four districts with jurisdiction in Oklahoma City). In other words, those nearly 143 million people have more in common with the metropolitan areas in which they live than with the districts—and, by extension, the local Churches of the Nazarene—who are otherwise responsible for those same areas.

In fact, there is precedent for establishing districts who step over international borders. For example, the Michigan district, organized in 1913, was named "Michigan–Ontario" from 1933 to 1935 before dividing in 1936 to form the Ontario (now "Canada Central") and Michigan districts (which divided in 1950 to form Michigan and Eastern Michigan, then Northern Michigan in 1987). Although the Michigan–Ontario partnership was short-lived, the truly unfortunate reality is that any semblance of partnership over the largest border crossing in North America, if it ever existed, has not carried on to today. Similarly, during a season when ministry among Latin@ populations along the US–Mexico border was managed under the "Department of Foreign Missions," multiple districts came into existence practically as border initiatives. What is now the "Western Latin American" district (see following section, "Concerning Ethno-Linguistic-Specific Districts"), whose boundaries are the same as the state of California, was organized in 1921 as the "Southwest Mexican" (obviously, referring to its location within the United States, not Mexico) district and, for a time, carrying the name "Mexico Border Southwest Pacific" (1928–1935). It continued to operate under variations on these names, such as "Southwest Pacific Mexican" (1936–39), "Mexico Southwest" (1940–1951), and "Southwest" (1952–1961, having used the name interchangeably with "Mexico Southwest" as early as 1947). And it was only in 1973 that the churches in Mexico were transferred to the newly organized Northwest Mexico district. Similarly, the Monterrey–San Antonio district, organized in 1943, became "Mexican–Texas" in 1946 when the churches in Mexico were transferred to form the Mexico Monterrey district (now Mexico Northeast). Oddly, the US district bore the name "Mexican–Texas" for only two assembly years before switching to "Texas–Mexican" for another two assemblies (1948–1959), then "Texano" (1950–1963), then "Central Latin American" (1964–2000), before assuming the current "Texas–Oklahoma Latin" moniker in 1964. The name changes are revealing in their own right (see following section, "What's in a Name?"), but the precedent and potential for missional administration across both major North American land borders is undeniable.

The missional demand for transborder entities is also highly present beyond North America. In fact, none of the 480 districts in the CotN worldwide currently encompasses a transborder agglomeration. Yet, there are over 15.3 million people living in the transborder agglomerations of Africa, around 3 million in Central and South America, some 54 million in Asia, and just shy of 19 million across Europe. Worldwide, over 121 million people—practically as many people as live in Japan—call a transborder agglomeration home. And as metropolitan areas are only forecast to grow exponentially in the coming decades, it is imperative that the CotN reassess where administrative boundaries fall and how we treat them—now!

The problem is not that lines are bad. On the contrary, lines can be clarifying. Indeed, at their best, lines help calibrate a district for mission. The problem is not even that district boundaries largely coincide with geopolitical lines per se. Geopolitical lines are as good a guide as any *when they actually assist the mission of the Church.* The root problem, however, is that the existing district boundaries, specifically in North America, are not *just* lines. We (Charles and Reuben) use the word *just* here in two ways. First, we mean the lines are not banal marks on a map. Arbitrarily drawn, yes. But the lines as we presently inherit and enforce them tell a story—a story which both informs our past and, like it or not, largely determines our immediate future. Second, by just, we mean the current lines do not reflect the justice which Wesleyan-Holiness folk otherwise admonish one another to seek (cf. Micah 6:8). To borrow language from this year's conference theme of the Wesleyan Theological Society, the overwhelming majority of district boundaries demonstrates the extent to which the CotN has *complied* with the state instead of *confronting* the injustices which the state perpetuates.

What's in a Name?

To compound issues, districts in North America have shown a tendency toward changing their names without adjusting their boundaries. (Admittedly, name changes are significantly easier. Under the current process, a district can change its own name in an attempt to clarify its identity or purpose. But districts typically must work together in order to adjust boundaries.) A significant amount of these name changes has mostly resulted in the shallow rebranding of a district which was once named after a metropolitan area which drove that district's formation in the first place. This trend in name changes without missional border adjustments demonstrates a seismic paradigm shift from organizing districts creatively around metropolitan areas to more arbitrarily dividing districts along geopolitical lines, especially state/provincial lines within the USA and Canada. The former practice was directly aligned with the mission, as the earliest Nazarene leaders put it, to "evangelistic and city mission work." The latter development, however, demonstrates the extent to which the denomination lost sight of that initial, proximal impetus. Instead, the Church of the Nazarene succumbed to feeding a subversive, even if unintended, culture in service to "spreading of the doctrine and experience of Christian holiness"[19] divorced from the cities where it took root.

The state of Texas, for example, was once divided among four districts: Abilene, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. Abilene, organized in 1909, was named "Hamlin" in 1914 when it was divided to form the San Antonio and New Mexico districts (the western panhandle went to New Mexico), then renamed Abilene in 1930 before taking the name "West Texas" in 1967. Dallas, organized in 1909, recently took the name "North/East Texas" in 2018. And Houston, which had been formed from dividing Dallas in 1948, eventually merged with San Antonio in 2004 under the name "South Texas." In other words, Texas went from having four districts named after urban centers to three districts having largely the same boundaries but bearing generic regional names. Worse, the ill effects signaled by these name changes and seemingly rigid boundaries uninformed by mission, severally inhibit local church activity among some of the fastest growing cities in the country. Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington (№ 4) has grown an

[19]First Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles, "Notice of First Meeting," 1895.

estimated 18.95% since 2010. Likewise, Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land (№ 5) has increased 19.35%; San Antonio–New Braunfels (№ 24) has gained 19.06%; and Austin–Round Rock–Georgetown (№ 29) has amassed a staggering 29.76% more in population since 2010, making it by far the fastest growing large metropolitan area in the United States. If anything, the districts in Texas should be pledging themselves to these cities—especially in their names—and preparing to divide or otherwise adjust their boundaries best to position the church to receive this influx of new neighbors.

Similar stories to these Texas districts have occurred throughout the United States. San Francisco, organized in 1908, changed to "Northern California" in 1921. Minneapolis, organized in 1923, became "Central Northwest" in 1927, then "Minnesota" in 1950 by dividing to form South Dakota, then "Prairie Lakes" in 2010 with the merger of the Dakota district. Washington, D.C. (whose district boundaries have never spanned the Potomac), organized in 1908, merged to form the Washington–Philadelphia district in 1911, then divided again in 1958, most recently taking the name "Mid-Atlantic" in 2004. Akron, organized in 1943, changed its name to "East Ohio" in 2002. Albany, organized in 1938, became "Upstate New York" in 1969. At the time of the 1908 merger, six of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene's first eleven districts bore the names of cities: Chicago Central, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Washington. Today, there are only 10 districts in the USA/Canada Region bearing the name of a city (from largest to smallest): Metro New York (MSA № 1), Los Angeles, Anaheim (№ 2), Chicago Central (№ 3), Philadelphia (№ 8), Sacramento (№ 26), Pittsburgh (№ 27), Kansas City (№ 31), Indianapolis (№ 33), and Joplin (№ 238). Only two of these ten districts encompass the entire MSA whose name it bears: Kansas City and Joplin. (The Joplin district was formed in 1958 by dividing the Kansas City district in half from North to South.)

Perhaps this largely cosmetic renaming of districts would not be so noteworthy, except that the trend *away* from city-based names—never *to* them—underscores the degree to which the CotN abandoned North American cities over the course of the 20th century, especially in those renamed districts. When the CotN stopped naming districts after cities, the church stopped growing in those areas. These name changes signal how the church went into "maintenance mode." While adopting the current nomenclature may have come from a desire to reflect more accurately the current composition of the now mostly rural local churches within those districts, such name changes serve anything but a truly localized mission. Instead of investing in the metropolitan core which breathes life into whole regions, the act of adopting second-hand, generic regional names for districts—especially when attached to cardinal directions and state names—conscribes the church to uphold an impersonal, colonialist, manifest destiny, if nowhere else in the world, then definitely in the United States. While hardly intentional, the act of renaming districts (and likewise neglect to organize more new districts around population centers) is a far cry from embracing the "great, toiling, struggling, sorrowing heart of the world"[20] by which the CotN derived its denominational name for the sake of the urban poor. Worse, because local church membership in the United States has remained predominantly rural, the change away from city-based names also props up the urban–rural dichotomy and the typically partisan political strife associated with it.

---

[20]J. P. Widney, *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1895.

District names are no less innocuous than district boundaries. Even if the name changes were intended somehow to be more broadly representative of the wider district membership, the result has still been the same: cities lose. And when cities lose, we all lose.

Concerning Ethno-Linguistic-Specific Districts

Our analysis would not be complete without considering those districts which exist as ethno-linguistic-specific entities. Especially moving forward into the twenty-first century, administrative boundaries in the CotN should only be proximal ones. For previous generations, establishing such districts served an important (albeit unfortunate) purpose of manufacturing representation where none could otherwise practically exist. As populations worldwide become increasingly more heterogeneous, however, if we truly wish to become the multicultural church we say we want to be, certainly in North America, then we must chart a path for unifying *all* our local churches within a given geographic area into a single district. The mission depends on it. Again, districts, zones/mission areas, fields, regions, and so forth in the CotN should only be proximal entities—period.[21]

While the Southwest Latin American, Southwest Native American, Texas–Oklahoma Latin, and Western Latin American districts, for example, have provided their members with a valuable sense of identity, that measure of identity has come at a great cost. In practice, these groups have only been further marginalized within the church at large. For example, the US Census Bureau designation "non-Hispanic white" accounts for only 40% of California's population as of 2010, on par with those of Latin@ descent—except the former population is shrinking while the latter is booming. The California districts other than Western Latin American already include several ethno-linguistic-specific local churches and ministries themselves, especially Spanish-speaking ones.[22] Yet, in 2020, California's majority-white proximal districts hold sway. And preserving ethno-linguistic-specific districts like the Western Latin American district also inherently preserves such power imbalances.

It would be counterproductive merely to eliminate ethno-linguistic-specific districts which have otherwise proffered their already underrepresented members with a still insufficient degree of autonomy. Instead, any new district we create from old ones must provide representation for the variety of subcultures within its bounds—especially those from oppressed populations. The CotN largely failed to navigate the pathway from segregation to integration in this regard with the "Colored District" (1944–52) and Gulf Central District (1953–69). Sufficing for a national advisory committee (now the "Black Strategic Readiness Team"), the white-led districts absorbed the black local churches within their bounds, *without any substantive changes in*

---

[21]For further discussion of embracing heterogeneity as the church and rejecting segregated, heterogeneous units, see Soong-Chan Rah, *The New Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Culture Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009).

[22]According to the Modern Language Association of America analysis of 2010 US Census Data, an estimated 57% (or 19,429,309) of California's population over age five speak only English at home, while 28% (9,696,638) speak Spanish at home. See "MLA Language Map," accessed June 25, 2020, https://www.mla.org/Resources/Research/MLA-Language-Map.

district administration.[23] We must not repeat these mistakes. Neither can we allow segregation within district administration to persist. In fact, the missional definition of districts is utterly incompatible with maintaining administrative segregation. Ethno-linguistic-specific *ministries* absolutely should be empowered to organize, but ethno-linguistic-specific *districts* are not the proper context. The General Assembly, for example, could order new districts made from existing ethno-linguist-specific ones to appoint special administrators or committees, even cosuperintendents and District Advisory Board positions. We also could create subcommittees of the USA/Canada Regional Advisory Council or of the General Assembly itself to ensure representation is not lost. But, by definition, the district is the express occasion to work across difference, not to alienate neighbors. While such past shortcomings with respect to ethno-linguistic-specific districts should give us pause today, knowledge of our history should also embolden us to pursue a more just future.

Taking into account the existence of ethno-linguistic-specific districts with respect to the 50 largest MSAs in the United States, then, Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land (№ 5), Phoenix–Mesa–Chandler (№ 11), San Antonio–New Braunfels (№ 24), Las Vegas–Henderson–Paradise (№ 28), and Austin–Round Rock–Georgetown (№ 29) all belong on the list of MSAs who need more missional district boundaries and names. The MSAs of Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim (№ 2), Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington (№ 4), San Francisco–Oakley–Berkeley (№ 12), Riverside–San Bernardino–Ontario (№ 13), San Diego–Chula Vista–Carlsbad (№ 17), Sacramento–Roseville–Folsom (№ 26), San Jose–Sunnyvale–Santa Clara (№ 35), and Oklahoma City (№ 41) are already on that larger list for another reason. In other words, 13 of the 50 largest MSAs lie within an ethno-linguistic-specific district's geographic bounds, eight of which are also split between two or more purely proximal districts (i.e., not ethno-linguistic-specific ones, or frankly, majority white ones). Taken together, these measures reveal that only 15 of the 50 largest MSAs lie within a single district (see table 1), with an estimated total population of 40,742,844 (12.4% of the US population), while the other 35 MSAs (see table 2) comprise an estimated total population of 139,848,207 (or 42.6% of the US population) whose MSA is split between two or more districts of the CotN. Instead of 50% more MSAs accounting for twice as many people, factoring in ethno-linguistic-specific districts reveals the imbalance is more like three-and-a-half times as many people live in the largest US metropolitan areas whose districts are most ill-suited to serve them.

Recognizing that the most diverse populations in the US reside within MSAs, the maintenance of current district boundaries only serves to exacerbate the injustice resulting from the lack of representation and cooperation across those already unjust lines. In no uncertain terms, current district boundaries across North America preserve white, rural, and suburban control over district administration. Not only is this control unjust, but it also prevents districts from making positive changes in their cities. Most of the current, longstanding district leadership, as much as we love and respect them, simply do not have the expertise to begin making the proper decisions for recapturing the CotN's missional heart for North American cities. District identity, even heritage,

---

[23]For further discussion of these segregated districts, see M. Brandon Winstead, *There All Along: Black Participation in the Church of the Nazarene, 1914–1969* (Lexington, KY: Emeth, 2013).

is highly important, but the broader legacy of the Church of the Nazarene hangs in the balance. Short of eliminating lay representation entirely in favor of a unilateral episcopacy (which would be disingenuous and counterproductive, not to mention highly unlikely), we have only one legitimate option for realizing a more just representation among our existing local churches (let alone the new ones that as yet need to be sponsored in the metropolitan cores!). We must redraw the map. In order to become the missional church we often claim and aspire to be, the administrative entities within the CotN must be redrafted to embrace the diversity among us. Only then can the missional definition first envisioned in 1903 and codified in 2009 for district administration be fulfilled.

Although we notice the uniquely North American manifestations of these problems arising from ethno-linguistic-specific administrative entities, we must not overlook correlative concerns in other parts of the world. For example, the Portuguese-speaking nations of Africa are currently on a single field (i.e., group of districts), spread from Cabo Verde to Mozambique. All other fields of the Africa Region are proximal. That is, the predominantly lusophone members in Equatorial Guinea mostly function administratively with respect to a language barrier rather than within their much tighter socioeconomic relationships, say, with the people of Cameroon (let alone the ethno-linguistic diversity within their own areas). Language barriers are real, but they are hardly representative or insurmountable—especially in terms of administration. In fact, logistical concerns like language barriers, legal nuance between municipalities, and the like demonstrate the value of larger administrative entities in the first place. And when factoring logistical concerns into discussions of administrative boundaries, such concerns must not be made to fortify geopolitical boundaries, particularly at the expense of collaborating with adjacent districts, zones, fields, states, countries, and so forth. Furthermore, for a region such as Africa, in which transportation and infrastructure constitute much greater challenges for expressing the connectional church which the CotN both claims and aspires to be, the improprieties of poorly drawn administrative boundaries are magnified exponentially.[24] This is not to say that lusophone members in Africa should not have the opportunity to strategize on behalf of their Pan-African lusophone neighbors. Of course, they should. In terms of church administration and fulfilling the missional definition of a district with respect to local congregations, however, proximity is everything.

Ethno-linguistic-specific entities, wherever we have instituted them in the past, especially which emphasize arbitrary geo-demographic lines over shared mission, keep would-be closest neighbors apart. The cumulative effect is that district boundaries tend to function more as fences, instead of encouraging districts and their collective local churches to operate as wells for the people around them—whoever they are, whatever their ethnic background may be, and whatever languages they may speak. Like the Samaritan on the road to Jericho, a truly missional district is first and foremost a proximal entity which intentionally transgresses cultural barriers to become a merciful neighbor as Jesus taught (cf. Luke 10:36).

[24]*Manual: 2017–2021, para. 200.3.*

Statistical Overview

In addition to data pertaining to the 50 largest MSAs in the United States (see tables 1 and 2), we have evaluated the missional health of each of the 78 districts in the USA/Canada Region (see tables 3 and 4). By doing so, we not only wish to illustrate the depth of the administrative predicament before the church at large, but, more importantly, we want to help general and district leadership determine which of the mission-oriented concerns we have identified now require the most attention for each of those existing districts.

We found that, of the 78 CotN districts in the USA/Canada Region, only 15 (see table 3) do not necessarily need to make any major missional adjustments to their name or boundaries. Apart from New England and Kansas City, the other 13 of these districts are largely rural, if not remote. In terms of membership, this means of the 615,610 full members in USA/Canada, only 99,069 (14.52%) live on a district that is potentially poised to fulfill the missional definition of a district. And in terms of congregations, of the 5,335 local churches across USA/Canada, only 878 (14.56%) belong to a district on which they can potentially 'support one another, share resources, and collaborate' most effectively on behalf of their nearest neighbors, as the church's missional definition of a district envisions.

In other words, the remaining 63 districts (see table 4), the other 516,541 (83.91%) members, and their 4,442 (83.26%) local churches have one or more administrative stumbling blocks preventing them from most effectively advancing the mission of the church together. Each of those 63 districts either (1) encompasses at least one metropolitan area with at least 900,000 in population, but for which it has not taken true responsibility—evidenced most clearly by the name that district bears; (2) divides at least one such metropolitan area; (3) conflicts with one or more overlapping districts (i.e., involves ethno-linguistic-specific ministries which need to be justly integrated into a newly emerging cross-cultural district); and/or (4) involves one or more metropolitan transborder agglomerations.

Indeed, there is much work to be done. But with this enhanced statistical scope, we are better poised to chart a path forward (see following section, "Draft Resolution to the Thirtieth General Assembly"). Similar tabulations pertaining to missional health should be completed for the CotN's other 402 districts in the other five regions and 161 world areas, and on behalf of the other 1,697,606 members of 25,540 more local Churches of the Nazarene worldwide.[25] We (Charles and Reuben) suspect many districts worldwide have fewer of the stumbling blocks before them which we have identified in North America. However, as we see from the evidence already uncovered, we also imagine the administrative issues our districts face globally are likely more similar and more widespread than any of us currently realizes. Like King Hezekiah, we have an opportunity to heed the prophet Isaiah's advice and "put [our] house in order" before we die (2 Kings 20:1). Although we have inherited many of these missional hazards from our ancestors—who certainly had their best intentions—the responsibility now falls to us to ensure

[25]Office of the General Secretary, "Annual Church Statistical Reports 2019," Church of the Nazarene, accessed June 25, 2020, https://nazarene.org/our-impact/statistics.

the next generation has the greatest opportunity to advance the global call to holiness into the middle of the twenty-first century.

Interviewing Church Leaders

To supplement our statistical research, we interviewed over a dozen current and former district superintendents, college administrators, missionaries, and general church leaders. We asked each of them the following series of open-ended questions:

1. If we were uninhibited by current boundaries and geopolitical lines, how and where would you suggest we organize districts "to facilitate the mission of each local church through mutual support, the sharing of resources, and collaboration?"[26] What about zones/mission areas?[27] Fields or Regions?[28] Nationally?[29] How "non-symmetrical" should this approach be worldwide?

2. Where should district boundaries coincide with geopolitical lines? Where should they not?

3. When should a district be divided? How so? How should a district not be divided?

4. How important do you think a district name is? Is there a better way, or perhaps a governing principle we should use when we name them?

5. As far as we may be able, how should we anticipate the successor to the modern nation–state in how we organize ourselves administratively?

6. If we were to propose any of these changes, how would you like to see that play out? What process would you like to see take place? What sorts of adjustments would you anticipate to district funding for educational institutions?

7. What objections would you anticipate to any of these proposals?

Together, we unearthed several unwritten stories and fresh ideas, some of which we may have cause to share at another time (for example, developing a better funding model for colleges and universities). Responses themselves ranged far and wide, but they mostly fell into two categories. First, slightly more than half of the interviewees suggested the Church needs to be reorganized into fewer, larger districts (namely, in USA/Canada). Second, slightly less than half suggested the mission of the Church would be better advanced by forming a greater number of smaller, more geographically concentrated districts. Interestingly, both groups cited economic as well as interpersonal reasons. The former claimed larger districts create larger funding streams and allow for a greater number of diverse groups over a wider area to work together, while the latter

---

[26]*Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 200.
[27]*Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 200.6.
[28]*Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 346–346.7.
[29]*Manual: 2017–2021*, para. 345.

recognized smaller districts create less overhead and encourage deeper relationships with more frequent interaction.

Our solution for ensuring major population centers reside within a single district addresses both concerns. On the one hand, we can keep a district from starting so small that it is not financially viable. This is especially true of our existing local churches in North America since, although they are predominantly rural and suburban congregations, most of them lie within MSAs. And, on the other hand, if and when a district develops to the point of needing to divide, the metropolitan areas within that dividing district do not suffer as a result.

Draft Resolution to the Thirtieth General Assembly

Therefore, by combining our qualitative and quantitative research, we have drafted the following resolution to the Thirtieth General Assembly.

Resolved, That a committee of [a number to be set by the General Assembly] consisting of the Board of General Superintendents, the Global Mission director, the regional directors, and [any others enumerated by the General Assembly], with the chair of the Board of General Superintendents as chair, be appointed to draw up recommendations to divide, combine, merge, create, and otherwise establish districts whose members and boundaries better position local churches to carry out the mission of the Church of the Nazarene in the twenty-first century, namely:

1. Districts whose boundaries encompass any metropolitan areas they would represent, with due regard not to become restricted by geopolitical boundaries, especially among those transborder agglomerations and conurbations where the Church of the Nazarene is recognized, and without dividing any metropolitan area whose population is over one million residents among two or more districts;

2. Districts whose names reflect the names of the major population center(s) within their boundaries, not vague geographic areas such as the name of a state, nation, or portion thereof;

3. Phase 3 Districts who would be large enough in current membership to remain economically viable yet small enough in geographic area to "facilitate the mission of each local church through mutual support, the sharing of resources, and collaboration" (*Manual*, para. 200), that is, for their members to be able to travel and otherwise participate together as a single district;

4. Existing ethno-linguistic-specific zones, mission areas, districts of all phases, and fields be integrated among the one or more proximal entities whose geographic area they would otherwise share; and that administrative positions and other appropriate structures be created to ensure the just representation of ethno-linguistic-specific groups within the newly realized and intentionally multicultural district at large;

5. The committee report with recommendations to the next General Assembly regarding the creation of these new districts;

6. The committee report with recommendations to the next General Assembly for a revised process by which the General Board, General Assembly, and Regional Advisory Councils will assume responsibility for completing a full review of current district boundaries every third General Assembly thereafter, dividing, combining, forming, merging, or establishing new districts as needed to continue advancing the mission of the church (cf. *Manual*, para. 200.1).

Conclusion

By adopting an explicitly missional definition for a district in 2009, the CotN invited its members to a renewed sense of purpose and resolve in sharing the cause of Christ worldwide. Leaving longstanding administrative boundaries untouched, however, contradicts this invitation if not voiding it entirely, especially for those district boundaries which uphold unjust geopolitical divisions instead of challenging them. It is not enough to change the lines. Indeed, we must effect a system-wide culture change to fulfill the missional purpose of our districts. But we have no hope of ever fulfilling that mission without realigning district boundaries to that mission and renaming them accordingly—for healing the fractures made to the church and for the sake of our neighbors in greatest need among the world's largest cities. We cannot rest our laurels on establishing a presence in 163 separate world areas and counting. Rather we must pursue relentlessly the call to be a truly global church who prioritizes people—working together across geopolitical lines.

The world's cities are growing, and we must adapt accordingly. We must not allow the rigidity of geopolitical lines or demographic distinctions to define the scope of the gospel for our cities, particularly for those cities which trespass upon such lines and whose communities and commuters are not confined by them. Neither should the church confine itself. Even as John Wesley said, "I look upon all the world as my parish," our prayer is that by recalibrating administrative boundaries in the CotN for mission in the twenty-first century—enacting a parish model at a global scale, and thereby fulfilling the missional impetus for district and general governance—we will yield an even more fruitful harvest than we could imagine today.

Tables

Table 1. 15 of 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas in the United States encompassed by a single district of the CotN

№	Metropolitan Statistical Area	Current CotN District	2019 Population Estimate
7	Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach	Southern Florida	6,166,488
9	Atlanta–Sandy Springs–Roswell	Georgia	6,020,364
10	Boston–Cambridge–Newton	New England	4,948,203
18	Tampa–St. Petersburg–Clearwater	Florida	3,194,831
19	Denver–Aurora–Lakewood	Colorado	2,967,239
21	Baltimore–Columbia–Towson	Mid-Atlantic	2,800,053
22	Orlando–Kissimmee–Sanford	Florida	2,608,147
31	Kansas City	Kansas City	2,157,990
38	Providence–Warwick	New England	1,624,578
39	Milwaukee–Waukesha	Wisconsin	1,575,179
40	Jacksonville	Florida	1,559,514
42	Raleigh–Cary	North Carolina	1,390,785
44	Richmond	Virginia	1,291,900
47	Salt Lake City	Intermountain	1,232,696
48	Hartford–East Hartford–Middletown	New England	1,204,877
Total			40,742,844
Percent USA			12.41%[a]

Source: US Census Bureau, "Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas Population Totals and Components of Change: 2010–2019," accessed June 25, 2020, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-total-metro-and-micro-statistical-areas.html.

[a] Based on a total population of 328,239,523.

Table 2. 35 of 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas in the United States divided among two or more districts of the CotN

№	Metropolitan Statistical Area	Current CotN Districts	2019 Population Estimate
1	New York–Newark–Jersey City	Metro New York, Philadelphia, Upstate New York	19,216,182
2	Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim	Anaheim, Los Angeles, Southern California	13,214,799
3	Chicago–Naperville–Elgin	Chicago Central, Northwestern Illinois, Northwest Indiana, Wisconsin	9,458,539
4	Dallas–Fort Wort–Arlington	North/East Texas, Southwest Oklahoma, Texas–Oklahoma Latin	7,573,136
5	Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land	South Texas, Texas–Oklahoma Latin	7,066,141
6	Washington–Arlington–Alexandria	Mid-Atlantic, Virginia, West Virginia North	6,280,487
8	Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington	Mid-Atlantic, Philadelphia	6,102,434
11	Phoenix–Mesa–Chandler	Arizona, Southwest Latin American, Southwest Native American	4,948,203
12	San Francisco–Oakland–Berkeley	Central California, Northern California, Sacramento, Western Latin American	4,731,803
13	Riverside–San Bernardino–Ontario	Southern California, Western Latin American	4,650,631
14	Detroit–Warren–Dearborn	Canada Central, Eastern Michigan	4,319,629
15	Seattle–Tacoma–Bellevue	Canada Pacific, Washington Pacific	3,979,845
16	Minneapolis–St. Paul–Bloomington	Prairie Lakes, Wisconsin	3,640,043
17	San Diego–Chula Vista–Carlsbad	Mexico Northwest, Southern California, Western Latin American	3,338,330
20	St. Louis	Illinois, Missouri	2,803,228
23	Charlotte–Concord–Gastonia	North Carolina, South Carolina	2,636,883
24	San Antonio-New Braunfels	South Texas, Texas–Oklahoma Latin	2,550,960
25	Portland–Vancouver–Hillsboro	Oregon Pacific, Washington Pacific	2,492,412
26	Sacramento–Roseville–Folsom	Central California, Sacramento, Western Latin American	2,363,730
27	Pittsburgh	East Ohio, Pittsburgh, West Virginia North	2,317,600
28	Las Vegas–Henderson–Paradise	Arizona, Southwest Native American	2,266,715
29	Austin–Round Rock–Georgetown	South Texas, Texas–Oklahoma Latin	2,227,083

Table 2 cont. 35 of 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas in the United States divided among two or more districts of the CotN

№	Metropolitan Statistical Area	Current CotN Districts	2019 Population Estimate
30	Cincinnati	Eastern Kentucky, Indianapolis, Southwestern Ohio	2,221,208
32	Columbus	North Central Ohio, Northwestern Ohio, South Central Ohio, Southwestern Ohio	2,122,271
33	Indianapolis	Indianapolis, Northeastern Indiana, Northwest Indiana, Southwest Indiana	2,074,537
34	Cleveland–Elyria	East Ohio, North Central Ohio	2,048,449
35	San Jose–Sunnyvale–Santa Clara	Central California, Northern California	1,990,660
36	Nashville–Davidson–Murfreesboro–Franklin	East Tennessee, MidSouth	1,934,317
37	Virginia Beach–Norfolk–Newport News	North Carolina, Virginia	1,768,901
41	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma, Northeast Oklahoma, Southwest Oklahoma, Texas–Oklahoma Latin	1,408,950
43	Memphis	MidSouth, North Arkansas	1,346,045
45	New Orleans–Metairie	Louisiana, MidSouth	1,270,530
46	Louisville/Jefferson County	Kentucky, Southwest Indiana	1,265,108
49	Buffalo–Cheektowaga	Canada Central, Upstate New York	1,127,983
50	Birmingham–Hoover	Alabama North, Central Gulf Coast	1,090,435
Total			139,848,207
Percent USA			42.61%

Source: US Census Bureau, "Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas Population Totals and Components of Change: 2010–2019," accessed June 25, 2020, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-total-metro-and-micro-statistical-areas.html.

[a] Based on a total population of 328,239,523.

Table 3. 15 of 78 CotN Districts in the USA/Canada Region potentially not needing to change boundaries or name

id[a]	District Name	Full Members	Local Churches[b]
67	Alaska	1,881	28
29	Canada Atlantic	1,457	19
8	Canada West	2,950	37
11	Colorado	11,159	69
18	Hawaii Pacific	2,327	23
20	Intermountain	11,361	52
73	Joplin	8,895	104
24	Kansas	8,276	86
74	Kansas City	17,282	89
77	Maine	2,753	59
78	New England	9,672	101
105	Northern Michigan	2,350	36
45	Northwest	9,503	77
51	Rocky Mountain	2,118	39
101	West Virginia South	7,085	59
Total		99,069	878
Percent USA/Canada		14.52%[c]	14.56%[d]

Source: Office of the General Secretary, "Annual Church Statistical Reports 2019," Church of the Nazarene, accessed June 25, 2020, https://nazarene.org/our-impact/statistics.
Note: These are the only districts in the USA/Canada Region which do not meet any criteria qualifying for table 4.
[a] As assigned by the Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center.
[b] Total of "Organized Churches > This Year" (col. 5) and "Churches Not Yet Organized" (col. 6) from source.
[c] Based on a total of 615,610 full members in the USA/Canada Region.
[d] Based on a total of 5,335 local churches in the USA/Canada Region.

Table 4. 63 of 78 CotN Districts in the USA/Canada Region in need of missional boundary adjustments and/or name changes

id[a]	District Name	Full Members	Local Churches[b]
79	Alabama North†#	5,429	65
90	Anaheim†§	7,443	78
5	Arizona*§‖#	9,738	66
6	Canada Central*†‖#	4,305	60
7	Canada Pacific*†‖#	1,702	33
89	Canada Quebec*#	1,639	16
81	Central California*†§#	10,706	73
80	Central Gulf Coast†#	4,081	49
10	Chicago Central†	9,526	85
2	East Ohio†#	7,710	77
15	East Tennessee†#	8,032	74
13	Eastern Kentucky†#	5,113	62
14	Eastern Michigan†‖#	11,574	79
132	Florida*#	20,561	152
17	Georgia*#	8,712	89
21	Illinois†#	7,857	81
22	Indianapolis†	8,467	71
23	Iowa†#	5,424	70
26	Kentucky†#	7,957	116
27	Los Angeles†§	12,588	72
28	Louisiana†#	3,566	54
38	Metro New York†	14,727	118
30	Michigan*#	8,162	72
71	Mid-Atlantic*†#	11,619	108
135	MidSouth†#	17,012	116
33	Missouri†#	5,823	65
34	Nebraska†#	2,341	28
37	New Mexico*†§‖#	5,301	50
39	North Arkansas†#	6,629	61
40	North Carolina†#	6,482	64
88	North Central Ohio†#	11,308	62
12	North/East Texas†§#	7,975	69
43	Northeast Oklahoma*†§#	5,810	46
42	Northeastern Indiana†#	12,387	94
82	Northern California†§#	5,754	94
47	Northwest Indiana†#	8,516	39
46	Northwestern Illinois†#	6,270	66
75	Northwestern Ohio†#	10,233	61
111	Oklahoma*†§#	15,500	84
49	Oregon Pacific†#	11,692	85
72	Philadelphia†	7,578	65

Table 4. 63 of 78 CotN Districts in the USA/Canada Region in need of missional boundary adjustments and/or name changes

id[a]	District Name	Full Members	Local Churches[b]
50	Pittsburgh†	5,827	81
84	Prairie Lakes†#	5,333	92
83	Sacramento†§	11,392	67
53	South Arkansas†#	6,338	48
54	South Carolina†#	10,382	76
9	South Central Ohio†#	12,992	73
107	South Texas*†§‖#	12,995	106
57	Southern California*†§‖	9,765	64
87	Southern Florida*#	15,583	92
58	Southwest Indiana†#	8,065	81
102	Southwest Latin American*†‡§‖#	1,910	33
103	Southwest Native American*†‡§‖#	1,369	36
59	Southwest Oklahoma†§#	5,914	49
76	Southwestern Ohio†#	11,818	80
96	Texas-Oklahoma Latin*†‡‖#	1,495	31
4	Upstate New York*†‖#	4,231	47
61	Virginia*†#	13,999	101
62	Washington Pacific*†‖#	14,018	87
1	West Texas†§‖#	10,317	107
100	West Virginia North†#	5,267	49
93	Western Latin American*†‡‖#	2,283	34
66	Wisconsin*†#	1,999	39
Total		516,541	4,442
Percent USA/Canada		83.91%[c]	83.26%[d]

Source: Office of the General Secretary, "Annual Church Statistical Reports 2019," Church of the Nazarene, accessed June 25, 2020, https://nazarene.org/our-impact/statistics.

[a] As assigned by the Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center.

[b] Total of "Organized Churches" > "This Year" (col. 5) and "Churches Not Yet Organized" (col. 6) from source.

[c] Based on a total of 615,610 full members in the USA/Canada Region.

[d] Based on a total of 5,335 local churches in the USA/Canada Region.

* District encompasses at least one metropolitan area of +900,000 in population, but has at least one of the following issues:

† District divides at least one metropolitan area of +900,000 in population.

‡ District is an ethno-linguistic-specific entity.

§ District overlaps an ethno-linguistic-specific district.

‖ District involves at least one transborder agglomeration.

District name does not reflect a metropolitan area of +900,000 in population within its bounds.

Bibliography

Busic, David A. *The City: Urban Churches in the Wesleyan-Holiness Tradition*. Kansas City, MO: Foundry, 2020.

Cunnigham, Floyd, ed. *Our Watchword and Song: The Centennial History of the Church of the Nazarene*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 2009.

Journals of the General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene. 22 vols. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene, 1928–2017.

Lillie, Reuben L. and Charles L. Perabeau. "#GeographyMatters: Keeping Religion and Race in Their Rightful Place." 16th annual meeting of the Wesleyan Philosophical Society. Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY, March 2, 2017.

———. "A World of Difference: Wesleyan Tradition and the Scientific Method in Global Contexts." 15th annual meeting of the Wesleyan Philosophical Society. Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA, March 10, 2016. https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/phil_facp/3/.

Manual of the Church of the Nazarene. 34 editions. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene, 1895–2021.

Modern Language Association. "MLA Language Map." Accessed June 25, 2020. https://www.mla.org/Resources/Research/MLA-Language-Map.

Office of the General Secretary. "Annual Church Statistical Reports 2019." Church of the Nazarene. Accessed June 25, 2020. https://nazarene.org/our-impact/statistics.

Parker, J. Fred. *Mission to the World: History of Missions in the Church of the Nazarene through 1985*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 2000.

Perabeau, Charles L. "The Church of the Nazarene in the U.S.: Race, Gender, and Class in the Struggle with Pentecostalism and Aspirations Toward Respectability, 1895–1985." PhD diss., Drew Theological Seminary, 2011. https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/soci_facp/1/.

Perkizer, W. T. *Called Unto Holiness: The Story of Nazarenes: The Second 25 Years, 1933–58*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1983.

Price, James Matthew. "Megaregions." Professor Price. https://www.professorprice.net/uscanadamegaregions.html.

Rah, Soong-Chan. *The New Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Culture Captivity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009.

Smith, Timothy L. *Called Unto Holiness: The Story of Nazarenes: The Formative Years*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1962.

US Census Bureau. "Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas Population Totals and Components of Change: 2010–2019." Accessed June 25, 2020. https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-total-metro-and-micro-statistical-areas.html.

White House Office of Management and Budget. "2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas." *Federal Register* 75, no. 125 (June 28, 2010): 37246–52. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2010-06-28/pdf/2010-15605.pdf.

Winstead, M. Brandon. "'Evangelize the Negro:' Segregation, Power and Evangelization with the Church of the Nazarene's Gulf Central District, 1953–1969." *Didache* 8, no. 2 (January 2008): http://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/issues-topmenu-38/59-vol-8/35-vol-8-no-2-jan-2009.

———. *There All Along: Black Participation in the Church of the Nazarene, 1914–1969*. Lexington, KY: Emeth, 2013.