

**STATEMENT ON THE 30TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

The world has been impacted by an unexpected pandemic that has affected every area of life, including the health, safety, finances, and mobility of the global church. As a result, the Board of General Superintendents (BGS) called for several entities to review plans for the upcoming 30th General Assembly and Conventions, scheduled for 23 June -2 July 2021 in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. This review has considered the purpose of the General Assembly, the options available to achieve the purpose, and the implications of convening the General Assembly on the scheduled dates.

Purpose of the General Assembly

The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene serves as a guide when it comes to understanding the full purpose of the General Assembly. As a uniquely global body, the General Assembly is one of the primary, visible reflections of the unity in the Church of the Nazarene (*Manual*, “Preamble to Church Government,” p. 64). In addition, “the General Assembly is the supreme doctrine-formulating, lawmaking, and elective authority of the Church of the Nazarene,” (*Manual*, p. 300). Therefore, the purpose of the General Assembly is both constitutional (legislation, election, and doctrine-formulation) and connectional (an expression of the global unity and diversity of the denomination).

Current considerations

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched the global church in many ways. As the virus spreads around the world,

- Global travel has either been restricted or deemed unsafe.
- Embassies and consulates have closed, and the dates for reopening remain uncertain.
- Access to visas to travel to the United States and through transit points have been delayed.
- Financial challenges at the local church level have impacted the districts’ ability to budget for the upcoming General Assembly.

As the BGS has consulted with a variety of professional and ecclesial advisors, most agree that the current conditions will continue for an extended period of time, recognizing it is difficult to forecast when the pandemic’s impact will slow.

Based on these considerations and realities, the BGS has determined that the current conditions do not allow the denomination to fulfill the purposes for which the General Assembly has been designed. The health risks, restricted mobility, and lack of financial resources all combine to create limitations for a truly global representation to attend the General Assembly as scheduled in 2021.

In harmony with the provision in *Manual* 302.1, the BGS met with the Executive Committee of the General Board to review the possibility of holding an electronic, remote General Assembly in simultaneous locations around the world. At the 10 June 2020 meeting of the Executive Committee of the General Board, it was unanimously decided “a multi-site electronic assembly would not allow us to fulfill the essential purposes of the General Assembly as stated in the *Manual*.”

Based on these realities, the Executive Committee of the General Board, acting on behalf of the General Board, unanimously recommended that the General Assembly Commission “consider postponing the 30th General Assembly to a time when the conditions may guarantee the safe participation of a large global contingent.”

DECLARATION

After studying the current impact of COVID-19 globally, including the likelihood of conditions being appropriate for scheduling the 30th General Assembly in a way that includes both significant global participation via attendance and an appropriate emphasis on the health and safety of visitors and delegates, the General Assembly Commission, acting with the authority vested by *Manual* paragraph 302, has taken the following action:

1. To declare a state of emergency that prevents the implementation of the 30th General Assembly as scheduled in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, in 2021.
2. To postpone the meeting of the 30th General Assembly to 2023 given the fact that there is no assurance of global mobility and global economic recovery for at least two years.
3. To work as a General Assembly Commission on determining the actual dates and location for the 30th General Assembly in 2023 as sites become available.

A WORD FROM THE BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS

This has been a very difficult yet crucial decision. When we began meeting with various constituencies to review the realities brought upon us by this global crisis, we soon realized that there were no ideal options for us. We firmly believe that it is essential for the global family to gather together, not only to fulfill our constitutional mandate to formulate doctrine and polity but especially to reflect the richness of our unity expressed by the beautiful diversity of our global family. And yet, we take seriously the necessity to protect those attending, as well as the representative nature of our denomination by ensuring that everyone will be given equal opportunity to attend a gathering of this magnitude.

This has been a complicated decision. While we would have loved to postpone the assembly for only one year, we could not gain assurance of higher participation from our brothers and sisters from those global communities that have been affected by the pandemic due to either limited healthcare, financial means, or the capacity to travel.

Though we are grieved by the extended postponement, we support the decision of the General Assembly Commission to allow for adequate time to safeguard lives and save financial resources.

Let us continue praying for the Lord to guide and keep the church and to provide what is needed for all of us to gather together soon, at the appointed time.

These are unprecedented times, but any uncertainty regarding the future is fortified by the promise: “Blessed are those whose strength is in the LORD, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage ... They go from strength to strength till each appears before God in Zion” (Psalm 84:5, 7).

Board of General Superintendents