

# Rocky Mountain District

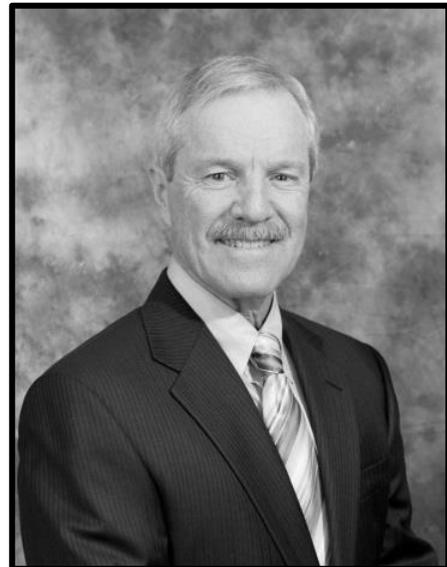
## 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Assembly

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# “It Is Time”



**Dr. Gustavo Crocker**  
**General Superintendent**



**Coach Bill Carr**  
**District Superintendent**

**Report of the District Superintendent**

**Rev. (Coach) Bill Carr**  
**Rocky Mountain District Assembly 2018**  
**Report of the District Superintendent**  
**Friday, June 22, 2018**

In the writings of the one who referenced himself as "the teacher," Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 3:1 that there is a right time for everything; or there is an opportune moment for every activity; or to all things there is a right season for action. Regardless of which translation you would choose to reference, the basic meaning remains: there is an appropriate time for all actions in dealing with life's circumstances.

It is in this light that I would ask you to join me in assessing this "Season" of the Rocky Mountain District Churches of the Nazarene. In so doing, it is my prayer and hope that we will collectively come to the conclusion that "It Is Time."

**I. Time to Reflect and Rejoice**

As we have entered into God's "New Day" for our District churches, "It Is Time" to reflect and rejoice that God is at work among us. I've asked Jeff Lauver, pastor of Great Falls Church; Rev. John Spencer of our Big Sky Ranch Ministry; Rev. Alex Williams, pastor of Summit Nazarene; and Rev. Matt Tygart, pastor of Harvest Community, to share a "New Day" story.

**Rev. Alex Williams, pastor of Summit Nazarene in Sheridan, Wyoming**

Donnie Horsley considered Sheridan Nazarene Church his home church for many decades. But he never faithfully attended until recently. He refused to answer God knocking on the door of his heart for years and became very involved with the things of the world and its false promises.

Donnie was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer, his sister has been inviting him to church for a while, and a couple months ago he finally agreed.

Before coming to Church, he had been reading Luke 14, about the salt losing its saltiness. And Pastor Alex preached out of that text and used an illustration to explain the passage. Donnie knew that God was speaking to him and he responded by raising his hand during the altar call.

Donnie and his wife Louise continued worshiping at Summit Nazarene for several weeks. We started a new series called, "In Light of Eternity." The series explained the importance of living for eternity now because our life here is a vapor but our life somewhere else is eternal. After preaching a message on having an eternal perspective

and the reality that we either go to heaven or hell, Donnie responded to the Holy Spirit's leading came to the alter and gave his life to Jesus.

Now, Donnie lives in light of eternity knowing that this life is like a mist compared to eternity. He told me something I will never forget. My diagnosis of cancer, was God's act of mercy in giving me a second chance to say yes to his plan for my life. He said I no longer have any regrets and I'm ready to meet my savior in heaven. Donnie could pass from this earth any day now, but his salvation is secure because the grace of our loving Father.

### **Rev. Matthew Tygart, pastor of Harvest Community in Powell, Wyoming**

For the last couple of years, I have been coaching soccer for the city in the various forms of this. Several of the players over time have begun to call me Pastor Matt even though they don't know what that means. One particular player named Clinton who also called me Pastor Matt was a friend of my son Caidon. For about a year prior to this story Caidon had been praying for Clinton to come to church.

One particular day, this last year, I got a phone call from a man named Chris that told me he really needed to talk to me. So, I set up a time frame at the church to meet. Chris comes to the church and sits down with me and begins to tell his story.

He started by telling me that he had recently tried to commit suicide and was freshly out of observation at the hospital. This was alarming to me but nothing that didn't seem under control. He then tells me that a friend of his told him to seek-out a pastor for counseling through his pain. He said that he didn't know any pastors but he did know that his son when I coached him called me Pastor Matt. So, he decided to call me.

He then goes into a story about a time 12-years prior, in which he found himself needing surgery due to a metal flake that had landed in his eye from his job. During the surgery his wife, daughter, and sister were coming to visit him and to pick him up after the surgery as they could not be there at the beginning of it. On the way to the hospital his wife, daughter, and sister were hit by a car and died. When he awoke he was a widower with only one child.

He then went on to tell me that he had been blaming God for this tragedy for the last 12-years. As he cried this testimony to me, he made it clear that this was the first time that he had ever spoken about that day to anyone since the day in which it happened. And the reason he felt he needed to bring it up now was that his wife was currently trying to divorce him and he couldn't take losing his wife and three babies all over again.

Over the next three hours Chris and I talk about sin being the skewing of God's perfect plan. And how because of this sin, bad things happen and that God was still sovereign despite sins destruction all around us. We talked about how God had a fix to the sin problem and that he had a way to make him perfect and take this sin away. After three hours Chris accept Christ into his life.

For the next three months Chris came to church every Sunday. Shyly at first but opened up as he came. Shortly after this Chris brought his children to church they were Clinton, Katie, and Corbin. The Sunday that they decided to come to church, the Children's Church lesson was on praying for other people in need. Clinton spoke up in anger and yelled, "no one prays for me, why should I pray for others." In which my son chimed in and told him that he had been praying for him about a year prior to him coming to church and that God answered his prayer because he was there. Clinton started crying at this realization. Caidon and Clinton continue to be buds to this day.

We gave Katie and Clinton Bibles shortly after their arrival to the church. Two months ago Katie came up to me and excitedly exclaimed that she had finished reading it. I laughed thinking maybe she was just being facetious but then Clinton chimes in saying, "It's true she reads it ever night and every day, she reads it at school and makes me carry it home for her." This made me cry tears of joy seeing a babe in Christ discover God.

Chris' wife would end up divorcing Chris despite many righteous attempts to save his marriage but through the power of Christ he survived knowing it was out of his control but was in God's control. A few months ago Chris was relocated to North Dakota for his job but he still calls me for advice and counsel and always joins us for church in our live casts. His children still come to church and every time Clinton sees me from the playground of the school he still cries out, "Hey pastor Matt." Which serves as a reminder for me. They may not know why they need Jesus, but when they seek him HCC is here ready to tell the story.

### **Pastor Jeff Lauver, pastor of Great Falls First in Great Falls, Montana**

God has done so much here at Great Falls Nazarene this year, but I have been most blessed by the redemptive work he has done in the lives of Michael Stuart and Morgan Bourbeau. Michael began attending here while at the prerelease center. He quickly was welcomed by the church and began to find his stride in trying to establish a consistent walk with Christ. Morgan, after seceding that the life she was living was destructive and exhausting found her way to the Great Falls Rescue Mission. She became a part of our church while in the discipleship program at the mission. God has done such a redemptive work in both of them and they have found a home here at GFNAZ, serving in all sorts of areas of ministry.

Their lives have provided me with two of the greatest highlights of the year here. First was the Sunday that they stood before the congregation giving their testimonies. (The PG-13 versions) It's a hard thing to bare your life in front of people, warts and all, especially people you know and love. In talking with Michael and Morgan their concern was that people here only knew them post-Jesus and they were a little worried how people might react to who they used to be. That's where the highlight comes in. To hear what God has done for them was great but the highlight was the congregation's response to their stories. I felt as though hearing their entire stories made us love them all the more. What a highlight, in his great redemptive way God changed these two individual lives in amazing

ways. The second highlight is even better. Apparently, God had already decided to take their individual stories and make them one. That's right, they are now Michael and Morgan Stuart, God is so good. To see what God can do in an individual story is astounding to see what he is doing when he combines those stories is unbelievable. What a highlight for us to participate in his work.

I love the fact that God is redeeming people here at this church and through this church. I can't wait to see the lives that will be changed as Michael and Morgan continue to live and share their story with anyone who will listen. This is what I know of them, they see their gifts from God as gifts to be given away.

**Rev. John Spencer, pastor of the Big Sky Ranch Ministry (Montana and Wyoming)**

Report electronically

## **II. Time to Reaffirm and Renew**

In Exodus 19:4-8, Moses and the people of God who are now free from exile, free from bondage and free from enslavement, stand before God at the mountain called Sinai. There, they renew and reaffirm their covenant relationship to God. It is a covenant of blessing and responsibility:

"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now if you will obey Me and keep My covenant, you will be My own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to Me. And you will be My kingdom of priests, My holy nation. This is the message you must give to the people of Israel. So, Moses returned from the mountain and called together the elders of the people and told them everything the Lord had commanded him. And all the people responded together, 'We will do everything the Lord has commanded.' So, Moses brought the people's answer back to the Lord."

"It Is Time" that we, the Rocky Mountain District, reaffirm our identity, and thus renew our commitment to living out the blessings and the responsibilities of our identity.

Our Identity: We are first and foremost those who have experienced and embraced God's redeeming and renewing grace, love, forgiveness and empowering presence, all through faith and trust in Jesus Christ, and obedience to Him. It is by way of His life, crucifixion and resurrection that we can and do live as God's holy people.

"It Is Time" that we dare to become like Jesus, who was considered by many of his day to be a "crazy" young Rabbi. He dared to challenge the accepted conventional

world and religious views of His day. He lived out a lifestyle of obedience to God's commands. He lived out a life focused on worship of God in all areas of life. He lived out an example of loving others sacrificially, just as God loves us. He lived a life of being rightly related to God, to others, and to God's mission.

Jesus lived what was considered a crazy, insane life. To quote Bishop Michael Bruce Curry of the Episcopal Church, "What the church needs, what the world needs, are some Christians who are as crazy as the Lord Jesus. Crazy enough to love like Jesus, to give like Jesus, to forgive like Jesus, to do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God- like Jesus. Crazy enough to dare to change the world." Can this happen? Is this happening? Yes, it is. There are indeed crazy Christians challenging and changing the world. Watch with me the following of Global Crazy Christians daring to live like Jesus in obedience and faith to God.

Video Clip: Insanity of God

Will you join me in affirming our identity in Christ? Will you join me in renewing our commitment to live out the faith expression of being a Jesus-follower that the world will call crazy, but of whom Jesus would say, "Well done, good and faithful one"? Let's dare to live like Crazy Christ Followers. "It Is Time."

### **III. "It Is Time" to adopt and adjust to a new Metric Evaluation that focuses on Faithfulness and Fruitfulness.**

We have somehow allowed a distorted understanding of "church health" to create a false sense of well-being regarding the church's effectiveness in its mission and purpose.

We need to ask ourselves, not just now, but continually, "What is the business of the church?" What is to be the goal product of our budget expenditures, our programs, and our busyness of activities?

The business of the church is not to sustain the church as an institutional entity. It is at this point that we can easily get distracted, even to the point that our current metrics can cause us to lose focus on the mission (or "business") that Jesus appointed the church to do:

1. We can pay our allocations in full
2. We can show an increase in SDMI average attendance
3. We can show an increase in average worship attendance
4. We can report increase in finance giving
5. We can report enhanced facilities

All of these criteria are good, and certainly can help in fulfilling the mission/business of the church. However, these alone are not the focus of Jesus' commission. Rather, He directed us to "Go, make disciples of the nations, baptizing them, teaching them to observe and live in obedience to all I have commanded..." Our business is to seek out all those who are living apart from Jesus and lead them to faith and obedience to Him.

John Wesley was so focused on this as the business of the church that he reminded his pastors, "It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society/congregation, but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord." What is the business of the church? To seek and lead to Christ all that are apart from Him. What is the goal product of our endeavors? To encourage, lead, teach, and assist all who confess Jesus as Lord to live out a holiness lifestyle that reflects Jesus' character and conduct as their own. Thus, we must turn our attention to what metrics will actually help us focus on this goal. What score card can help us evaluate our progress in the business and goal product of the church?

I would suggest the following:

1. The yearly number of people coming to faith in Christ and expressing their faith through baptism;
2. The yearly number of people actively engaged in an accountability discipleship group in which they are being mentored and where they are mentoring a new believer in Jesus toward Christlike character and conduct;
3. The yearly number of people actively engaged in ministry services that express the love, grace, and mercy of Jesus to the community in which the church exists;
4. The amount of money spent on reaching those living apart from faith in Christ, through evangelism endeavors and ministries of grace and compassion, compared to the amount spent on those already part of the church;
5. The new stories of life transformation through Christ being shared on a monthly basis; and
6. The amount of prayer activity in the church that is both corporate and personal.

It is my conviction that "It Is Time" to adopt these new proposed metrics, and when they are being realized, we will experience increase in worship, increase in

SDMI, increase in finances, as well as the ability to pay church allocations and enhance church facilities as needed.

We must adjust our focus from the preservation of an institutional organization to the perpetuation of the "Good News" mission of God's grace, love, forgiveness and life-transforming power through a living faith relationship with Jesus.

#### **IV. "It Is Time": Time to Embrace a Passion for God and to be Embraced by the Power of the Holy Spirit!**

To again quote John Wesley, "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist, either in Europe or America. But, I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power."

Rev. Jim Cymbala, in his book Fresh Power, makes this observation, "The church cannot be the church without the Holy Spirit abiding and empowering it. The degree to which we understand and experience the Spirit of God will be the exact degree to which God's plan for our churches will be accomplished."

"It Is Time" for us, the Rocky Mountain District Churches of the Nazarene, to embrace a passionate hunger and thirst for God. Jesus' promise to His disciples is recorded in John 14:15-17:

"If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you now and later will be in you."

"It Is Time" that we, through a surrender of self to the indwelling presence of the Resurrected Christ, experience the empowerment of the Holy Spirit that enables us, that compels us and that motivates within us a desire to love others as Jesus has loved us and loves us still.

"It Is Time" to Love Like Jesus, Live Like Jesus, and Lead Like Jesus. "It Is Time" to have a passion for God and others that is reflected in the life story of Desmond Doss.

Video Clip: Hacksaw Ridge

Just One More Lord...help me to reach, to save Just One More.

"It Is Time" to begin now. Join me in praying for God's anointing of a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit that results in a renewed boldness and empowerment to be His witnesses. May He anoint us, both individually and as the Body of Christ, with a renewed passion to Live Like Jesus, to Love Like Jesus, and to Lead Like Jesus.

"It Is Time!"

Respectfully Submitted,

**Coach Bill Carr**

Rocky Mountain District Superintendent