

NAZARENE MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

In response to Christ's Great Commission, missionary organizations were established by various groups and denominations. Nazarene Missions International (NMI) traces its origin primarily to the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America (APCA), when in April 1899, the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) was founded.

The WMS was officially recognized as an auxiliary organization of the Church of the Nazarene in 1915 at the fourth General Assembly. It was recommended that there be an organization in each local church to increase knowledge and interest in missions by prayer, by obtaining special speakers, and by keeping in touch with the missionaries; and to cooperate with the (local) Church Board in raising their apportionments (for missions).

The first General WMS Convention was held in June 1928; and it was at that Convention, the General Council members were elected by the Convention (prior to that the Council was elected by members of the General Assembly).

The name of the ministry has changed over the course of its history: 1928 – Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS), 1952 – Nazarene Foreign Missionary Society (reflecting the introduction of men, youth, and children into the organization), 1964 – Nazarene World Missionary Society, 1980 – Nazarene World Mission Society (reflecting the international aspect of the organization), and 2001 – Nazarene Missions International (NMI).

Purpose of NMI – To mobilize the church in mission through praying, discipling, giving, and educating

NMI is a direct line for missions in the local church and has often been described as "the face of mission in the local church." In every sense of the word, the NMI is the denomination's organizational representative, dedicated to the cause of world evangelization. While other departments also support missions, it is the distinctive task of NMI to bring each mission area into the local church in such a vital way that every Nazarene will be glad to be a part of global outreach, spreading the good news of full salvation (holiness) to the ends of the earth. The NMI provides the infrastructure, the spiritual dynamic vehicle, whereby the local church is mobilized in mission.

Though worded differently, the objectives given in the 2009-2013 *NMI Handbook and Constitution* are the same as those expressed in **1916** (when the first constitution was drafted):

1. Praying – Interceding for leaders and churches and for the Holy Spirit to draw all people to Christ.
2. Discipling – Involving and mentoring future missions leaders, especially youth and children, to make Christlike disciples for God's mission in the nations.
3. Giving – Devoting ourselves and our resources, especially the world Evangelism Fund, to extend Christ's kingdom.
4. Educating – Informing people of the world's needs and enabling our church to meet those needs in Christ.

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TIME CHART

- 1915
 - Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) officially recognized on the general level (natal date of organization – October 8, 1915)
- 1919
 - Memorial Roll introduced and Relief and Retirement Fund established
 - Rev. Mrs. Susan N. Fitkin became general president
- 1921
 - First missionary picture set published
 - Mrs. Ada Bresee appointed the first Box Work (LINKS) secretary
- 1923
 - The WMS Constitution officially adopted and placed in the *Manual*
 - Missionary Pamphlets/ Leaflets (became books) initiated
- 1924
 - Requirements for Standard and Superior Societies established
 - Prayer and Fasting League introduced
- 1927
 - First adult study book published
- 1928
 - First General WMS Convention held in June in Columbus, Ohio – Global Council members elected by the Convention, instead of General Assembly
 - Name changed to Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS)
- 1940
 - Twenty-fifth anniversary year
- 1948
 - Rev. Mrs. Susan Fitkin retires (Project – Fitkin Bible Training School)
 - Dr. Louise R. Chapman elected general president
- 1949
 - Alabaster giving launched
 - Ten Percent Giving introduced
- 1952
 - Men became active members
 - Name changed to Nazarene Foreign Missionary Society (NFMS)
- 1953
 - First offering for Spanish Broadcast (World Mission Broadcast)
- 1955
 - Fortieth Anniversary Project – Offering to open Nazarene work in Papua New Guinea (received in 1954)
- 1958
 - Children's lessons appear in *Junior Topics*
- 1964
 - Dr. Louise Chapman retires (Project – Africa Literature Fund)
 - Name changed to Nazarene World Missionary Society (NWMS)
- 1965
 - Fiftieth Anniversary Project – Papua New Guinea hospital
 - NMI reading book tapes began
- 1972
 - First men elected to the General Council (Dr. Paul Gamertsfelder and Dr. Morris Weigelt)

- 1974 • Men in Missions (Work & Witness) program introduced by the General Council
- 1976 • Distinguished Service Award introduced
- Box Work expanded to LINKS
- Mission Award introduced (replaced Star Society)
- 1980 • Name changed to Nazarene World Mission Society
- 1981 • Prayer Mobilization Line introduced
- 1982 • Venezuela Project
- 1985 • Men in Missions program becomes Work & Witness program
- 1986 • Dr. Nina G. Gunter elected general director
- 1987 • First issue of *International Mission Education Journal* (Wanda Knox Memorial Project)
- LINKS became international
- 1988 • Medical Plan became international
- 1989 • First Million Hours of Prayer plan for General Assembly and Conventions
- 1990 • NMI 75th Anniversary celebrated (Project – Hong Kong and Beyond – \$885,484)
- First District Presidents’ Gathering
- 1991 • Award of Excellence began (World Evangelism Fund Overpayment Plan)
- 1992 • 100th Birthday Project Offering for World Evangelism Broadcast – in honor of Dr. Louise Chapman’s 100th birthday
- 1993 • Praying Through the Window, an interdenominational prayer effort for the 10/40 Window introduced, and NMI encourages participation
- 1995 • NMI website and Global Information Network set up on the Internet
- Prayer Mobilization Line expanded to E-mail and website
- NMI 80th Anniversary celebrated (Project – NMI International Student Scholarship Fund – initiated in honor of the celebration in 1995 – goal: \$500,000)
- 1996 • Regional program coordinators put in place on each world mission region
- Nazarene World Week of Prayer first observed (February 25-March 2)
- Mission education point in Mission Award program expanded to include learning processes in addition to reading books and curriculum
- Casa Robles 50th Anniversary celebrated (October 12) – Project (to provide items for the missionary retirement center in 1996) – \$150,000
- 1997 • “Wings for the Gospel” – Denomination-wide NMI/Children’s Ministries

- joint project for Nazarene Mission Aviation initiated – \$502,000
 - The name “World Evangelism Fund” replaces “General Budget”
 - NMI participates in International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church for the first time
 - Children’s Alabaster Box introduced
 - “World Evangelism Broadcast” replaces “World Mission Radio”
- 1998
- Organized prayer for the JESUS Film Harvest Partners ministry initiated
- 1999
- *Mission Connection* replaces *Focus*
- 2000
- Alabaster 50th Anniversary celebrated 1999-2000 – \$6,091,700
 - Crisis Care Kits program initiated
- 2001
- Gifts from the Heart, a new avenue of Medical Plan giving, introduced
 - Name changed to Nazarene Missions International
- 2002
- “Mission Award” changed to “Mission Priority One”
- 2003
- Mission call coordinator added as an NMI council position
 - Witness on Wheels, cooperative offering project between NMI and Children’s Ministries – \$400,000
 - “World Evangelism Broadcast” becomes “World Mission Broadcast”
- 2004
- Memorial Roll for Children introduced
 - “Books for Pastors – Tools for Ministry,” NMI 90th anniversary project for 2004-05, initiated – amount given: \$2.6 million
- 2005
- School Pal-Paks, a cooperative project with Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, initiated
 - “Medical Plan” name changed to “Missionary Health Care”
 - Dr. Daniel D. Ketchum elected global director (formerly “general director”) – the first male global NMI director
- 2006
- GenNEXT liaison added as member of NMI Office staff
 - NMI leaders encouraged to mentor young people to plan for future mission leaders
- 2009
- Funding the Mission giving plan implemented
 - Rev. Jennifer Brown elected global president – the first president elected from outside the USA/Canada Region
- 2010
- *Living Mission* – the revised adult mission education curriculum – is introduced
 - Mission Immersion introduced for high-school juniors and seniors; trip to Guatemala
- 2011
- Prayer Mobilization Line Facebook page initiated
 - Nazarene Missions International Facebook page initiated

- 2012
 - NMI Mission Books offered in eBook formats
 - Global NMI Handbook released
 - Mission Immersion to Kenya
 - Alabaster giving reaches US \$100 million since the offering's inception
 - Prayer Mobilization Line expanded to include Spanish translation
- 2013
 - Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library, product of "Books for Pastors" project, goes live
 - Global NMI Convention takes place globally via live streaming video in 11 sites
 - Dr. Philip Weatherill elected global president – the first male president
- 2014
 - "100 Years, One Mission, Eternal Opportunities," NMI 100th Anniversary project, initiated – goal: global participation
 - Mission Immersion age limits expanded – high-school juniors and seniors to Quito Ecuador, high-school freshman and sophomores to El Paso, Texas
- 2015
 - Lola Brickey elected global NMI director
 - Prayer Mobilization Line expanded to include Portuguese translation
 - NMI 100th Anniversary celebrated

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