

Mission Convention Themes Southern Florida 1986 - 2009

- 1986 That the World May Know** (Pompano Beach)
First convention – theme “Get through it” ☺. Used video projector and computer graphics for first time at a convention.
Speaker: John Burge, Surinam
- 1987 That the World May Know Through Loving, Caring Families** (Bradenton First)
Emphasis on getting families involved with missions.
Speaker: Nina Gunter, General NWMS Director
- 1988 MISSION: Giving the World His KEYS to the Kingdom** (Ft. Lauderdale First)
Decoration: Large Styrofoam painted keys hung on outside and inside of sanctuary. Everyone received a “set” of keys to the Kingdom.
Speaker: John Hall, Ecuador
- 1989 Lifting Up Missions Around the World** (Bradenton First)
Decoration: Huge helium filled earth balloon tethered outside sanctuary (could be seen for miles). Inside of sanctuary was converted to look like a “797” Jumbo Jet. Helium filled balloons were used during theme presentation with trailing banners.
Speaker: Dennis Schmelzenbach, Africa
- 1990 The Fields Are Ripe for Harvest** (Princeton)
Decorations: Tractors, Farm equipment in parking lot and lawn of church. Huge produce stand in foyer. Every person was given stalks of wheat that were held high (for waving) during musical presentation – to simulate a wheat field ready for harvest. This was also the year the Berlin Wall fell. A “live” phone conversation was held with a German mission representative. A reception was held. Everyone was required to go through “Check Point Charlie” beside a huge Styrofoam replica of the Berlin Wall – which was torn down during the reception.
Speaker: Steve Weber, Stewardship Services
- 1991 Leading the World to Springs of Living Water** (Bradenton First)
Decorations: Rented a huge lighted, bubbling waterfall that was placed in the sanctuary. Missionaries John and Linda Seaman sent water from their assignment in the Ivory Coast so that each person at the convention could be given a small vial of that water (for a prayer reminder). All music was “water” related.
Speakers: John & Linda Seaman, Ivory Coast - Africa
- 1992 Let the Light Shine** (Pompano Beach)
Decorations: A huge working lighthouse was constructed in the church choir loft. All music had a “light” theme. Small flashlights were provided to everyone to shine and illuminate their mission commitment at the service conclusion.
Speakers: Ken & Linda Walker, Swaziland - Africa
- 1993 Sharing the Bread of Life** (Bradenton First)
Decorations: A commercial “working” bakery and “oven” were constructed as the backdrop for the theme. A dramatic presentation was prepared using all council members as bakers (complete in white uniforms and baker’s hats). A loaf of “fresh baked” bread was given to everyone present. A moving “bread sharing” session was held at the end of the service.
Speaker: Robert Scott, World Mission Director
- 1994 Touching Our World, Take HIS Towel** (Bradenton First)
A drama was presented re-enacting the Upper Room scene with Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. Missionary speaker Richard Knox was involved in the theme presentation and transitioned into his sermon. At the conclusion of the evening, each person present came forward to make a decision and to receive either the “Towel of Pilate” or the “Towel of Jesus”. Each person was given a small hand towel imprinted with the theme “Take HIS Towel.”
Speaker: Richard Knox, Thailand

1995 Touching Our World, Lift HIS Light (Pompano Beach)

A dramatic presentation was presented entitled “Is the Light Out.” A candle lighting processional for all present concluded the service. All the shrubbery at the exterior entrance to the church was blanketed with thousands of twinkle lights.

Speaker: Robert McCroskey, Indonesia

1996 Touching Our World, Live HIS Love (Venice)

A dramatic theme presentation was presented entitled “Bridges of Blood.”

Speaker: Louie Bustle, World Mission Director

1997 From the Crescent to the Cross (Ft. Lauderdale First)

Decorations: The Middle Eastern village of Al Bab was created in the large covered walkway of the host church. The village consisted of a special market including a vegetable and fruit stand, silversmith, pottery/perfumes, leather/ rugs, open-air eatery, village drinking well and an evangelical print shop. Goats and sheep were rented to “run” the streets. A 40’ painted mural provided the Middle Eastern backdrop. Each shop was actually promoting LINKS, Alabaster, Prayer, Children’s Ministries, World Mission Broadcast and Compassionate Ministries. The village opened before and after the services. Council members dressed in authentic Arab garb. A minaret was built for people to see as they arrived at the church.

Speaker: Kay Browning, Middle East

1998 Touching Our World, Rekindle the Flame (Bradenton First)

The largest choir in the district’s history presented a rendition of “Pentecostal Fire is Falling.” A beach scene with Jesus cooking fish over an open fire began the theme presentation. That beach scene/camp fire - transitioned to utilization of all district leaders setting around the campfire to hear the presentation and invitation-to-service by Missionary John Haines. A large 8’ globe was lifted and began spinning. Retired missionaries with flashlights formed an aisle for young people to come forward and to place on the globe a chemically lit cross. It was a very moving scene in the dark of the sanctuary with the spinning globe showing hundreds of small-lit crosses representing individual mission commitments. The choir sang, “Rekindle the Flame” as everyone joined with their own light wand.

Speaker: John Haines, Eurasia Regional Office

1999 Respond With Love (Pompano Beach)

Decorations: Large walk-through hearts were constructed on either side of the sanctuary. At the conclusion of Dr. Gunter’s presentation, a presentation was given describing/showing the mission ministries of the district NMI. A challenge was given to those who would be willing to commit their love to action. Those responding walked through either of the two heart doorways and “into the world”. The group surrounded the sanctuary and held a continuous string of heart shaped lights. Everyone received a heart shaped (jar opener) as a reminder of their “love commitment” to missions.

Convention project: Fill overseas container with clothes for hurricane-ravaged Dominican Republic

Speaker: Nina Gunter, General NMI Director

2000 Reach Our World: Be His Hands (Sarasota First)

Decorations: A garden of large Styrofoam hands greeted guests as they entered the sanctuary. Large banners with the theme were displayed also showing various groupings of hands. Each person was given a brown envelop with direction not to open until instructed. A dramatic presentation was given with Doubting Thomas and the other disciples dialoging with Jesus. The disciples were asked to be the hands of Jesus to prepare the world for His return. Missionary Bob Skinner challenged everyone to be the hands of Jesus for the 21st Century. The lights were dimmed to show a large choir. Through the use of black lights only the choir’s white-gloved hands were seen. Those present were challenged to come forward to “be the hands of Jesus.” The audience was instructed to open the brown envelope to find and put on a pair of white gloves. Black lights shined on the entire audience to produce a very moving effect – demonstrating the new “hands of Jesus” for the 21st Century.

Convention project: Canned goods for Nazarene food project in Miami

Speakers: Bob & Colleen Skinner, Ukraine

- 2001 Beyond 2002: Imagine the Harvest – Rejoice and Celebrate** (Palm City New Hope)
Decorations: Multi-colored balloons everywhere. Teens were used to present an impressive flag/banner processional. Celebratory international music: Haitian Children’s Choir, Steel Drums, Caribbean Sax, and Hispanic/Jewish-Shofar Celebration “Dance” Team. The evening service concluded with a huge ceiling balloon drop during a big musical celebration. After evening service a large outdoor celebratory “International Festival of Tastes” was held.
Convention project: Musical instruments for Haiti and used Missionary Reading Books for Caribbean
Speaker: Terry Ketchum, Caribbean Regional Office
- 2002 Called to All Nations** (Bradenton First)
Decorations: Flags of the Nations. Presented musical “Called to All Nations” by large choir. Teens were used for flag processional. Gave tribute to members of law enforcement/military with a Civil Air Patrol Color Guard. Wove “Called to All Nations” theme with impact of tragedy of 9/11/2001. Each person received a miniature “Called to All Nations” flag for use during theme presentation.
Convention project: Medical and school supplies for Ukraine
Speakers: Harmon and Cindy Schmelzenbach, Fiji
- 2003 Called to All Nations: Teach the Word** (Pompano Beach)
Decorations: Church sanctuary was converted to a classroom. Council members wore school faculty “uniforms”. Printed program was designed as a “Report Card”. Every person received a Southern Florida “Teach the Word” pencil. Had the largest Children’s Mission Bell Choir ever. Theme was highlighted with an original “Teach the Word” drama using local church drama troop. Used numerous “Teacher’s Apples” for awards and rewards.
Convention project: School supplies for Dominican Republic
Speakers: Michael and Rachael McCarty, Thailand
- 2004 Called to All Nations: Race to Win the World** (Bradenton First)
Decorations: Checkered racing banners were used inside and outside of the sanctuary. The District NMI President and Superintendent entered the Convention each riding motorcycles. The NMI Council all wore bright yellow “NAZCAR” polo shirts. A teen choir was utilized. Everyone entering sanctuary over 35 received a “mystery package” in a large envelope. At the end of the service, the mystery package was opened revealing a Frisbee in the shape of a steering wheel. All those over 35 were to find someone younger than 35 to symbolically give them the “Steering Wheel of Life” so they could “steer” into the world for evangelism. As the “Steering Wheels” were exchanged so were commitment cards.
Speaker: Steve Heap, Brazil
- 2005 Called to All Nations: His Power is Greater – GO!** (Ft. Myers First)
Decorations: take-off from hurricanes: 1) Used 5 video projectors to tell story of multiple hurricanes impacting south Florida, 2) Used full-orchestra for music, 3) Used electric bucket truck outdoors to provide entrance “back-drop”, 4) Used high power search lights to broadcast light of hope into sky during outdoor “Hurricane Celebration Party”, 6) Used flashlights/commitments cards in mystery envelopes provided to everyone, 7) Held Hurricane Appreciation Power Event (Food, Fun, Electricity) – after service. Note: this was after 3 hurricanes had ravaged south Florida in 2004.
Speakers: Fred and Dinah Huff, Africa Regional Office
- 2006 The Cross: Seize it! Share it!** (Pompano Beach)
Decoration: Used 2 large 16’ crosses as main focus, coupled with international flags. Large cross greeted visitors outside the church. The Convention was a “welcome home” party for SFDistrict Missionaries Dwight & Carolyn Rich (and children). We raised \$21,000 to help the Rich’s buy a new mission vehicle. Small lighted crosses were distributed to people as they came forward at the end of the evening service to nail their commitments on the 2 crosses.
Convention project: Theological books for on-district pastors
Speakers: Dwight & Carolyn Rich (and family), Ecuador
- 2007 The Cross: Seize It! Share It! - BRING IT HOME** (Venice)
A large 13’ magnetic cross was built. As people entered the church they were requested to write the name of each of their family members and the name of one of our Southern Florida missionaries on a 3x5 refrigerator magnet card. They then placed the magnet card on the cross that was located in the church

lobby. At the conclusion of the service the cross (with hundreds of the magnet cards) was ceremoniously brought and mounted in the sanctuary followed by banner waving children. The people came forward and received one of the refrigerator magnets (from the Cross) at random. The magnet cards served as a prayer reminder. Everyone was asked to seek and find the family listed on his/her card. The Convention raised \$20,000 for its Brazil Work & Witness project.

Convention project: School supplies for Barbados Camp Children

Speaker: Steve Heap, Brazil

2008 Stars for the Cross (Bradenton First)

In honor of the 100th anniversary for the Church of the Nazarene and 30+ active and retired missionaries living on or from the Southern Florida District – the Convention gave tribute to the nearly 1,000 years of missionary service these individuals had provided. The evening service was for both the NYI and NMI Conventions. The retired missionaries arrived at the church for the evening service in chauffeured driven limousines through a driveway lined by teens holding the flags of the “Nazarene Nations”. General Superintendent Nina Gunter led the caravan to the church in a red Cadillac. She then greeted each missionary upon their arrival. “Reporters” interviewed some of them as they exited their limousines onto the red carpet. All of this was televised to the convention inside the sanctuary. A brief biography was read about each missionary as they entered the sanctuary to thunderous applause by the convention. Everyone on stage (including many of the missionaries) wore tuxedos or formal wear. During the service, five teens gave brief pictorial and oral summaries about the lives of five of the retired missionaries. Each teen was required to do research about their assigned missionary, spend at least a day with the missionary and prepare both a pictorial and written report about the missionary for presentation at the convention. The teens wore tuxedos or formal wear. Through a special district offering each missionary family was given a love offering of \$300. Missionaries Scott & Emily Armstrong (also in tuxedos/formal wear) gave a tremendously moving presentation and dozens of teens responded to their invitation to God’s service. (Note: The Armstrongs were scheduled to arrive in Miami early in the day from Guatemala. Their plane was extremely delayed. There seemed to be no way for them to get to Bradenton in time for the service, but God provided a means for Missionary Flights International (out of Ft. Pierce) to fly to Miami, pick them up and then fly them to Bradenton – just in time for the evening service. PTL). A special “Starry” reception for everyone was held to honor the 30+ missionaries after the evening service. Special Distinguished Service Awards were given to Dr. Chuck Gailey and Dr. Robert Perry for books they recently had authored (book signings were also provided).

Convention project: Crisis Care Kits

Speakers: Scott & Emily Armstrong, Guatemala

2009 “What’s that in your hand?” (Palm City New Hope Fellowship)

The theme was taken from Exodus 4 where God is having a conversation with Moses and then does something extraordinary from Moses’ ordinary walking stick. The theme was intended to encourage our people and churches struggling through very difficult financial challenges. Dr. Katie Pascall gave a very moving monologue at the beginning of the evening service explaining the significance of this scripture. Three “What that in your hand?” videos (about 5 minutes each) were shown giving the story of 3 of our churches which had overcome great adversity to joyfully pay or exceed their World Evangelism Fund allocations. Myrdith Clothaire was shown on the North Miami Haitian video leading her church in dynamic congregational worship. At the conclusion of the video, she and her church praise team were introduced to lead the Convention in exuberantly singing “Light of the World” in English and Creole. At the end of the service, the people were challenged to look what God had placed in their hands and to wait and expect God’s extraordinary blessings.

Convention project: Winter clothes for Caribbean delegates to the General Assembly

Speaker: Nikolaj Sawatzky, Eurasia Regional Office/Russia