

SYLLABUS
Exploring Nazarene History and Polity
Virginia District Training Center
Fall 2019

Location of the Course: Church of the Nazarene, 1107 Monroe Avenue, Front Royal, Virginia 22630

Course Dates: September 14, September 28, October 5, 2019

Instructor: Richard Guizar, M.Ed., James Madison University; BA Chapman University; Pastor, Church of the Nazarene 1965 to present

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Course Objective

This course is specifically designed for the person entering pastoral ministry. However, it would benefit anyone who will be employed by the church or who desires an understanding of the Church of the Nazarene, its history, membership, and how it operates. *History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene* is a prerequisite and foundation for the doing of ministry. The course is designed to produce understanding of the identity of the Church, what is membership and how one becomes a member, and how the Church operates at its various levels of local, district and general. Theoretical insight and practical knowledge are a must for the wide range of tasks which the pastor faces.

Unit 1 of these lessons considers the historical identity of the Church of the Nazarene. Our understanding of the Church of the Nazarene needs to be grounded in a biblical understanding of what it means to be the Church. It is both in faithful continuity with the New Testament Church and the result of the creative work of the Holy Spirit in history. As we review the development of key formative influences and doctrines through history, we can observe the particular and distinctive development of the Church of the Nazarene. In this way, we can see the particular and distinctive understanding of who we are and of our place in the broader Church. We also will be able to engage effectively in the ongoing dialogue of our identity. We can examine the core values of our Church: Christian, Missional, and Holiness. We understand ourselves as a Protestant church in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition that was formed initially as an organization out of the American Holiness Movement. Worldwide adaptations of this section should incorporate materials from their personal world area.

Unit 2 considers the questions of membership in the church. The *Manual* sets forth that membership should be based upon a personal faith in Jesus Christ, a commitment to the distinctive doctrines and practices of the church, and a willingness to work with the administrative structure. Our participation in the Church of the Nazarene is rooted in a profession of personal faith in Jesus Christ. For adults, this profession should be affirmed in the sacrament of baptism. Membership, itself, in the Church of the Nazarene, is a covenant with the church and the commitment of our calling. This includes our doctrines as expressed in our foundational Agreed Statement of Belief and the expanded Articles of Faith. Of central

importance to our tradition is the call to a radical commitment to Holiness, life reflecting the likeness of Christ. This call is a biblical imperative to all disciples and the General Rules and the Covenant of Christian Conduct serve to guide and inform our realization of that calling. The work of the church in worship, sacraments, and other means of nurture and spiritual disciplines serve to form our lives into Christlikeness. Every pastor should understand the meaning of our covenant in membership, be personally committed to it, and be able to lead new believers into membership.

Unit 3 discusses the polity or government of the church. The context of our church government has been a representative form of government with shared authority between laity and elder. The office of superintendent has been the primary mode of oversight. Ministry is the responsibility of both laity and elder. The church affirms the divine call for pastoral ministry, recognizes various tracks of ministry, and sets forth a program that leads to ordination. The work within the local church is governed by the *Manual*. The church also operates on a district and general level.

Recommended Reading

Church of the Nazarene. *Manual*, (current edition). Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House. This book is required for this course.

Session Date	Session Time
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9-14-19	8-5

Unit 1: Who We Are: Nazarene Identity in History

1. Nazarenes and the Church
2. Historical Development: Reformation and the Wesleyan Movement
3. Formation of the Church of the Nazarene
4. Church of the Nazarene in Local and Regional History
5. Defining Issues of the 20th and 21st Centuries

9-28-19	8-5

Unit 2: Membership: What it Means to be Part of the Church of the Nazarene and the Procedure for Uniting with the Church

6. Becoming a Disciple
7. Membership as Covenant in Community
8. Commitment to Shared Vision of Lifestyle
9. Becoming a Member

10-5-19	8-5

Unit 3: How the Church Functions: Polity of Governance

10. How the Church Functions
11. Lay Ministry
12. Pastoral Ministry
13. Local Church: Pastoral Relations
14. Local Church Administration

10-5-19	8-5

15. The District Church

16. The General Church

17. What Is the Church of the Nazarene?