



where WORLDS meet



the monthly newsletter for the church of the nazarene in eurasia

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Interview With Arthur Snijders (Part II)

By Gina Pottenger

In October, Arthur Snijders, field strategy coordinator for the Northern Europe Field, was elected as the new regional director of the Eurasia Region.

Where Worlds Meet sat down with Snijders over Skype to talk to him about his thoughts on the future of the region. See part one in the November issue by clicking [here](#).

WWM: What are the strengths as you see it on this region?

Snijders: I would think that our diversity is a strength. There's something special about people who overcome their differences and work together. I think we also are discovering what it means to develop local churches and local districts and to develop leaders to go with that. I see our region bringing young and old churches together, so in that sense we are a family because we have in the West churches that are older, and in India as well; at the same time we have very young, fresh churches, so we are as a region very strong.

WWM: What are some of the challenges we face as a region?

Snijders: Polarity is a challenge. I think the way that we resource our mission – both in finances and in personnel – that is a challenge because it would be very easy to say we invest where the church is growing in an explosive way. Well, that makes sense, but at the same time we should not neglect where the church is not growing and where it's just tough to share the Gospel.

Being a large district doesn't mean you're a mature district. These are words that some of the India and some of the Bangladeshi

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COVENANT DISCIPLESHIP IN ROMANIA



By Teanna Sunberg

Sighișoara, Romania – Some historians argue that the faith movement birthed by John Wesley actually saved England from experiencing a fate similar to the French Revolution. Yet, today the mention of a Wesleyan discipleship movement generally brings a yawn and a quick exodus from the conversation. It seems that the word "discipleship" fails to convey the radical transformation that snatched souls from the pit of hell and ransomed a bankrupt British society.

"We have not been intentional enough with discipleship training and practices," says Jay Sunberg, Central Europe Field strategy coordinator.

At the invitation of Rev. Tamara Hudson, district superintendent of Romania, Sunberg led a Discipleship Weekend in Sighișoara for 22 participants from the Romania District. These Romanian Nazarenes make a groundbreaking statement of faith about the Holy Spirit's power to redeem and transform at both individual and societal levels.

The agenda of the weekend was an interactive dialogue regarding the Biblical call to discipleship, the Wesleyan heritage of discipleship, and the concept of covenant discipleship. At the end of the weekend, the participants broke into four discipleship

groups and wrote a covenant statement which they commit to until the end of April.

Sunberg earned a Doctor of Ministry degree with his thesis on using contemporary methods for discipleship accountability. Building upon the theological work of Dr. David Lowes Watson who contemporized Wesley's approach to discipleship, Sunberg explored the possibility of utilizing social media methods to connect people for discipleship growth.

Out of this study, a new commitment to holiness and the necessity of submitting to lifestyle accountability emerged. According to Sunberg, "The concept of a radical lifestyle powered by heart holiness begins with a rewiring of how we think about discipleship. Conceptually, we must move from an 'it's my responsibility' to a 'we are responsible for each other's growth' mindset. Discipleship is about accountability, responsibility for each other, and the power of community."

The power of the new discipleship model begins with that rewiring of the discipleship concept. Participants commit to a weekly accountability check-in, but the key to understanding lies in community. The spiritual journey is based upon James 1:27, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure

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“I lived 30 years in my life....”

I didn't know what's the meaning of LOVE.”

By
Gina Pottenger



YOUR STORY
OUR STORY
GOD'S STORY

Born and raised in another religion, Hamadi* was so passionate about his beliefs that he was willing to kill to defend them. He was devoted to the religious text of his faith system. He never questioned his religion until he was 30 years old, when he came face to face with the love of Jesus Christ.

While still a teenager, Hamadi had had a falling out with his parents and left his native country to live in another Middle Eastern country. He only called his parents once a year.

The year he turned 30, he met a Christian for the first time. The Christian invited Hamadi to visit a church. He'd never had the opportunity before.

“Because of our background, people they usually fear to come and share Jesus with us,” Hamadi said.

At first Hamadi refused. But then he became curious, and three months later he visited the church for the first time. The preaching and information about the Bible and Jesus Christ meant nothing to him. But something else struck a chord deep inside.

“The love among those congregation allowed me to feel jealous because they love each other,” he said.

In light of what he had seen at the church, Hamadi began to examine his own religion's texts for the first time. What he discovered shook him to the core: the text was full of contradictions, conflicting claims and inconsistencies. He was flooded with doubt. According to his beliefs, doubt is punishable by death. And so he began to think about ending his own life.

Yet, he longed to know truth. He decided to just look at the Bible, and asked his friend for a copy. His friend gave him a Bible with the instruction to read the New Testament book of John first. Hamadi began to read. He stopped when he came to John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one

and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

“I lived 30 years in my life [and] I didn't know what's the meaning of love or being loved. It was the first time I was really touched in that verse. Is it possible that God loves me to an extent that He will die and He died instead of me?”

He devoured the entire book of John, and then Matthew and Luke. He was fascinated with the Sermon on the Mount. He felt that all his life he had been kept from knowing about the Bible and Jesus. Within three months of first opening the Bible, he knew that Jesus was the truth. He accepted the trinity and believed in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as God.

Now he had a dilemma. He knew he would be killed if anyone found out he had become a Christian. Not only that, but his family would be in danger. It all came back again to ending his life. Every night he was tortured by nightmares and couldn't sleep.

“I loved my family and I still love my family and I didn't want to offend my family or put danger for their lives. And I knew clearly that the time I accept Jesus Christ I will lose everything.”

Hamadi contemplated God's love for him, as written in the Bible, and knew that he was undeserving of that love. He couldn't accept it.

He drove to a bridge and stood there, preparing himself to jump off. But before Hamadi could do it, he felt something inside of him pushing him back from the edge and telling him to return home.

At home, he broke down, crying out to God, asking why God had chosen him to know the truth and torturing him with the impossible choice: living a lie in his former religion or dying for the truth.

Hamadi prayed that God would make the truth finally known to him once and for all, and if the truth was Jesus Christ, that God would remove all his fears and give him strength to follow Him.

That night, for the first time, he could sleep. When he awoke, he felt like a new person.

“I'm seeing this image – Jesus on the cross – and I saw myself like I'm stabbing Jesus. At that time I closed my eyes and I bowed my head and I started praying and accepted Jesus as savior.”

As he grew in his faith, he began to pray for a wife who would share his religious background so that she could understand him. Circumstances worked out so that he became engaged to a woman, named Layla*, who practiced his former faith. One month before their wedding, he revealed to her that he was a Christian. She was shocked, but agreed that she would still marry him if he didn't force her to change her religion.

They were wed, and Hamadi simply lived out his faith in front of her. Within one month, she had decided to follow Jesus, too.

Hamadi still hasn't told his parents that he follows Jesus. The time hasn't yet come. However, he did talk to his sister, who is a religious teacher, about the inconsistencies he found in the text of his former religion. When he admitted he no longer practiced his family's religious beliefs, she cut off contact with him.

In spite of his broken history with his family, Hamadi has been reaching out to them.

“When I accepted Jesus Christ, my relationship with my family became better.” □

**Names changed for security.*

ARTHUR: ADDRESSES REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT from page 1

superintendents were giving back.

We have a vast region so I think the temptation is to say we're growing so fast, but we should push ourselves to ask if there are countries where the Lord is calling us to enter.

And I think the last challenge is how can we grow to remain a holistic church. I think in our region we really have the opportunity to be truly church and at the same time truly involved in our society in acts of love and compassion. These things together are the Gospel – words and deeds – and together that is how we want to be present in our societies.

WWM: What are some priorities you have in front of you?

Snijders: Definitely we have to take care of building the regional team. We have two field strategy coordinator positions that are vacant at the moment and we have two more to come, so that is my priority to get the FSC team complete again. Coming in 3-4 months this will be it.

WWM: Are there any changes you plan or hope to make?

Snijders: It's too soon, because I must say I'm very impressed with everything that has been built up until now. I would rather continue with everything that has been established up until the point that it is clear that to move forward we need to make changes. I'm not the kind of leader who changes for change sake.

WWM: Should our region intersect more with the global church? If so, how?

Snijders: After my election, a missionary leader spent a weekend with me and Annemarie on orientation. He said solemnly, "Arthur, there are two things that you should remember: As regional director you are responsible for the missionary work of our church among 40 percent of the global population. And also for mission on the cutting edge because of the dominant presence of [another religion] in our region." Well, that made for a good night's rest!

But facing these realities cannot be done without helping the global church see these challenges and sharing generously any lessons learned on our region about spreading the Gospel. But it also calls for mobilizing our global church for mission involvement. Volunteers are needed, funds are needed, but even more – prayer for insight and spiritual wisdom is needed, as well as "faithcourage" for God-given opportunities.

I think that "the global church" goes

beyond our denomination. We have creative access areas where we can only reach out when we collaborate with neighboring regions, sister churches and organizations. If we want to do something useful for the Kingdom, it is by prayerfully being part of the movement of God's Spirit in this world. That movement is so much broader than our Nazarene tribe.

WWM: How do you plan to continue instilling in local churches a sense of their part in the mission?

Snijders: Over the last decade our region and RD have contributed to this awareness in multiple ways: by the various regional conferences, the Power of One initiative, and through communications like Where Worlds Meets and 'Eurasia Snapshots'. Our Work & Witness teams, our Mission Corps volunteers and our missionaries all help to keep the mission before us.



Education should not be overlooked, both locally and through our colleges. The region can facilitate but we cannot and should not replace the power of preaching the Word of God and of God's Spirit instilling deep conviction and obedience.

Compassion, urgency and faith are primarily born out of encounters with the living God. Seed sown in the good soil of the heart opens our eyes for God's mission right where we are. I strongly believe that if God finds a listening heart, that He will speak to that man or woman, and send them out, no matter what.

So we want to focus on the combination of mobilization of (Eurasia) volunteers and prayer and fasting, serving the Lord who is calling and sending His people.

WWM: Talk about the relationship between the regional office and the fields/districts/missionaries on the region and how you plan to influence that.

Snijders: Annemarie and I have just returned home from a nine-day series

of meetings: the Regional Advisory Council, the field strategy coordinators and ministry coordinators, and to top it all off, our missionaries' retreat. These turned out to be great connection-points for Annemarie and myself and our workers and Nazarene people.

One theme that we emphasized is interconnectedness. Basically it means people influencing other people with the focus on Christ. Look at it like a roof with shingles: they keep the rain out of the house when they partially overlap each other. No overlapping means water pouring into the house. Too much overlapping of the shingles means redundancy.

The RD and the regional office team can only reach so many people. However if we influence those we are connected with AND help them to influence those they are connected with, we become a roof with shingles protecting the house.

I am a great believer that beside the organizational relationship between the office and the districts and fields, there is a much deeper layer. That deep layer is sharing Christ's values with each other, respecting and thus listening to each other, and then acting boldly with faith and clarity. In their orientation and mentoring of us, Verne and Natalie Ward several times talked about "speaking truth into lives and situations." That kind of influence resembles what Christ did with His disciples.

So I envision missionaries speaking truth into situations by virtue of their cross-cultural gifts, and by these gifts to be able to listen to pastors and lay leaders, and act upon it. It is a two-way system that creates maximum room for the Lord to speak. As RD and regional team we want to be part of that interconnected movement of God in our region and world.

WWM: Is there anything else you want to say?

Snijders: I'm very grateful to people of all over the region. The international church has responded to my election as RD; it has been very encouraging and I feel that people are really going out of their way to help us transition and to help us minister as best as we can, so I really feel very privileged that I sense we are part of the church family. □

Correction: In the November edition of Where Worlds Meet we incorrectly stated that Arthur Snijders is the first person from the region to hold the director position. In fact, Thomas Schofield was the first person from the region to hold this position.

Making History: Revisiting A Woman Pastor In Bangladesh

By Gina Pottenger



Rev. Kanta Das was one of 30 women to graduate from the course of study through South Asia Nazarene Bible College (SANBC) and to be ordained in the historically largest ordination service in the Church of the Nazarene denomination in Bangladesh in March 2010. We sat down with Das in October to find out how God is using her as a pastor in southwest Bangladesh.*

Rev. Das was born in a big village – a place with a very nice hospital, schools and beautiful rice fields and fish ponds. Her father is a farmer who grows rice and vegetables. Her mother is a housewife.

Her family is Baptist and raised her in the Baptist church. In 2000 she married Sumon Das*, a Nazarene pastor and JESUS Film minister and, in 2002, she joined the Nazarene denomination.

Das helped her husband with his JESUS Film ministry. Along the way, she learned more about Jesus. Deeply impacted by repeatedly watching the death and resurrection of Jesus, she realized, “Jesus is the only God of all people in the world.” She also read the story of Jesus Christ and read the Bible regularly.

She was hungry for a deeper relationship and understanding with God, so she enrolled in SANBC, and completed the course of study in 2 ½ years. She and her husband saved anything extra that they earned to pay for her education.

During the courses, she realized God was calling her to become a pastor. Her husband encouraged her to accept the call.

“At first I was a little bit afraid, but when I read all the words of God and learned from different programs such as JESUS Film, SANBC and Sunday school, I realized God’s Word had a lot of power which can generate more power [to me] to address all my fears.”

Das was also uneasy about talking openly of Jesus Christ to the many people around her who worship other gods and are involved in other religions. As a new pastor, she had to overcome shyness, which took time.

Das is a bivocational pastor. She shepherds a church of about 35 people part-time and without compensation, and the rest of her time she is a nutrition facilitator for a food security project through Bangladesh Nazarene Mission (BNM).

“I am very delighted now as I disseminate God’s word to others,” she said.

Most of the people in her church are between 20 and 27 years old. Some of them work in agriculture, or make handicrafts out of bamboo and jute. Others are students in college. Many of them found Christ through the JESUS Film, and others were brought to the church through relationships with those new believers.

“I always tell them, ‘your Christian God will save you’ and I always encourage them to be strong in their faith.”

Das’s congregation doesn’t have a church building of its own, so they sometimes meet in one of the members’ homes, and other times at the office where Das works. They celebrate worship on Sunday mornings with singing a cappella, studying the Bible and praying together.

Das counsels many of the young people through the challenges they face in having left behind a belief in many gods and idols, because their family members and communities sometimes reject them once they decide to follow Christ.

“I always tell them, ‘your Christian God will save you’ and I always encourage them to be strong in their faith,” she said.

Being a woman pastor, Das said that people respect her and she does not have any problems due to her gender.



“My wife is very gentle, so she can attract people and she has also a sweet tongue, so the people receive her words very easily,” Sumon said. He believes his wife is a good pastor.

Through her work with BNM, she has formed about 18 self-help groups of impoverished women who save funds together so they can provide loans to one another for starting small business enterprises. She also teaches nutrition, hygiene and home gardening to these women, who represent about 300 families. One of the women established a grocery shop; another woman set up a tea stall. Some of the women sell vegetables in the market.

“It’s a great pleasure working with marginalized and uneducated people, educating them about their health and nutrition and even home gardening and... small enterprise development,” she said. □

**Names changed for security.*



Hungary Youth Inspired By Motorcycle Ministry

By Beáta Szilágyi-Kovács



On 19 October, a little quiet town called Hajdúhadház in Hungary became a loud and busy place for a few hours when the sound of five motorcycle engines filled the air. People on the street were trying to find out where these motorcyclists were going. No one would have thought that these machines are serving Christ.

The riders were Christian motorcyclists from the Community of Hungarian Christian Motorcyclists (MKMK – Magyar Keresztény Motorosok Közössége), who came to spend a day with the Hungarian Nazarene youth from all over the country during the District Youth Day. MKMK's members belong to various Christian congregations; however they all profess Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

They gladly share with everyone the gospel about the love of God and about the works of Jesus Christ in their personal life while building new friendships, planning trips with charitable purposes, organizing meetings and tours to offer an alternative to those bikers who are open to become acquainted with God.

Throughout the District Youth Day, we spent time getting to know them personally and the service they do, as well as to be together as a youth, to learn, grow, have fun, lead non-believing friends to Christ and be able to use this 30-person gathering to spread the gospel.

The morning started with a devotional by one of our youth who has a district license. We followed with a large group conversation where the bikers shared their testimonies. We heard some moving life stories from them and answers to questions by the youth.

Ilona Kulcsár, one of the organizers, said, "It was great to be with more mature, older Christians, who may seem very extreme for the first sight; however they maintain a deep relationship with God. I really liked to hear their personal stories and conversion. They told about their families, children and how

hard it is to watch them with patience while searching for God or isolating themselves from Him. It was moving to think about their difficult situation as parents."

Norbert Kovács, another of the participants, added: "I liked the intimate nature of the event, that is, the fascinating testimonies, different life stories and calls by God.... Furthermore, I appreciated the informal conversational opportunities during the breaks and after the event."

One of the bikers prepared a workshop with a pondering quiz about the nature of God and we learnt a lot about ourselves and how we see His character. In the afternoon the message was brought by one of the vice presidents of the Motorcyclists Community. And of course we worshipped God with many songs.

Before leaving, they generously offered a ride around the block to all of the eagerly awaiting youngsters, who could not wait to hop on to the back seats of the bikes.

Ilona concluded, "The motorbikes they came with were very nice. I also liked their youthfulness, but mostly I liked their commitment and the fact that these bikes are only tools in their hands to share the gospel and it did not become idols. Rather, they give thanks for it to the Lord. This sets an example to follow for those youngsters who exercise this type of evangelism, but are still inexperienced." □

"It was great to be with more mature, older Christians, who may seem very extreme for the first sight; however they maintain a deep relationship with God."

-Ilona Kulcsár



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*“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means God with us)”
(NIV)
Matthew 1:23*

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Disciple: In Community

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and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widow in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

The road to mature spiritual formation is sourced out of the intersection of works of piety and works of mercy. It is where they exist in the same place that holiness becomes tangible. The community shares responsibility for this journey instead of thinking of discipleship as an individual process. It becomes a shared, corporate responsibility of accountability, encouragement, mentoring, and prayer.

The Romanian District is using this new discipleship model in conjunction with their mentoring program for ordination and pastoral training. The hope is to build spiritual structures that lead to solid spiritual formation as individuals prepare for ministry.

To learn more about the growth of the Church in the Central Europe Field, visit www.centraleuropenaz.org. For more information about covenant discipleship, email Jay Sunberg at JSunberg@aol.com.

Prayer Requests

- Please pray for God to produce fruit in the Romanian Nazarenes who are participating in a new covenant discipleship initiative. Pray for the Holy Spirit to empower them and bring them maturity in their faith.
- Please pray for Hamadi* and Layla* as they grow in their faith. Ask God to open the doors at the right time for Hamadi to share Jesus with his family.
- Ask God to bring grace, wisdom and Holy Spirit empowering to Rev. Kanta Das* and her fellow women pastors in Bangladesh. Ask for blessings on their ministry, that their influence will expand and their churches grow.
- Please pray for Arthur Snijders the Eurasia Region's new director. Pray that his move and the transition process will go smoothly and he and his wife adapt to their new role in ministry. Also, pray for wisdom, guidance and vision for the Eurasia Region.
- Christ commands us to pray for more workers for the harvest in Luke 10:2: “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (NIV). Pray that God would raise up and equip new workers across the region.

Where Worlds Meet is the monthly newsletter for the Eurasia Region of the Church of the Nazarene. To subscribe, e-mail communications@eurasiaregion.org or visit www.eurasiaregion.org.

We welcome stories, photos and prayer requests. E-mail submissions to communications@eurasiaregion.org

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