

where WORLDS meet

the monthly newsletter for the church of the nazarene in eurasia

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Progress continues toward café ministry in Sweden

Malmo, Sweden—Phil and Juliene Munts are in the second year of their efforts to open a Nazarene coffee shop and ministry in a rural area of southern Sweden called Malmo.

The Munts moved from the United States to Sweden for Phil's job, and sought to buy a place in southern Sweden that could be turned into a coffee shop after being inspired by the burgeoning Nazarene café ministries in Poland. Relying on guidance from the Lord, in December 2011 they chose to purchase a massive piece of potential in the country rather than a quiet apartment in the city.

"When we felt led of the Lord to move to Sweden and buy a place for a someday café," Juliene said, "we thought the Lord would provide resources, people and finances to begin the process immediately. Instead, it has been a lot more like Eugene Peterson's interpretation in The Message of Matthew 10:9 and 10: 'Don't think you have to put on a fund-raising campaign before you start. You don't need a lot of equipment. You are the equipment, and all you need to keep that going is three meals a day. Travel light.' It makes me ponder more deeply the idea of going into all the world and what that means."

Things have moved slower than Juliene would have liked or expected, but they are still moving.

The Munts obtained a name for the ministry, which is now

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Jonah | Pastor saved Story | from well collapse



Pastor Yuriy Shpakov was working in this well, his job as a bivocational pastor in Ukraine, when the well collapsed, trapping him inside.

By Zee Kleshchar
Eurasia Region Communications

*I*t was a work day as usual. Yuriy Shpakov, one of the Nazarene pastors in Ukraine, went to dig a well -- digging wells was his everyday job. This particular well was a tricky one from the very beginning. The job was almost done, when several of the concrete rings cracked at the very bottom. Due to the bad quality of concrete, they did not withstand the pressure of the rings above. Using a bucket made from an old washing machine, Shpakov collected the broken concrete parts and the owners of the property pulled the bucket out. Everything was going according to the plan.

"I heard a terrible loud noise. A cascade of concrete remains of the well rings and sand fell on me."

"Suddenly, as I was 18 meters deep in the well, I heard a terrible loud noise. A cascade of concrete remains of the well rings and sand fell on me. Several times I got hit on the head so hard that I've seen stars! As soon as the noise stopped, I opened my eyes and realized that I am stuck in a very small, dark chamber."

The owners of the well went to get help, but no one knew what to do -- it was a very complicated situation. One wrong move and the entire mass would topple onto Shpakov. The only thing that saved him from immediate death was the bucket that got stuck, a feeble barrier to the catastrophe.

After getting over the initial shock, he assessed the situation.

"I am not sure why, but I got a

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“Follow God, even though you die.”

Given to God

By
Richard Gammill



Waving his sword in the air, Narayan Yangad kicked his horse in the flanks and raced around the compound of missionary homes.

“Come out and face your punishment,” he shouted. “You have shamed your family and brought dishonor to the clan. You deserve to die.”

Why had his son, Konduji, turned his back on 330 million Hindu gods and embraced the Christian God of these foreigners? His lack of respect was an outrage. The honor of the clan must be upheld.

The clan survived through thievery and robbery. The missionaries had appealed to the authorities when the entire clan was threatened with imprisonment. They said, “Allow us to take them under our protection and we will assure you of their good behavior.” The robbers were given jobs on the farm acreage owned by the mission station, providing them at least a subsistence livelihood.

This part of Maharashtra, in central India, had only recently – at the turn of the 20th century – been exposed to the Christian message and the response was fierce resistance. The missionaries’ ways seemed strange and repulsive to people whose traditions were rooted in antiquity.

One of the missionaries ran out to stop Narayan from his deadly purpose. “Your son has done a good thing. None of your gods have brought him the peace he

has found in Jesus.”

“I will not kill him,” Narayan said, “but he cannot expect me to be pleased with what he has done.”

Narayan relentlessly demonstrated his displeasure. At mealtime he ordered, “Konduji, you will not eat with your family. Get out!”

Konduji sat under a tree with his bowl of rice and hot chilies. Narayan kicked over his water pot. “No water for you. Let your God satisfy your thirst.”

Under the patient teaching and guidance of the missionaries, Konduji grew in his new-found faith. He talked often with his six half-brothers and three half-sisters about Jesus. In time they all agreed with Konduji that they would follow Jesus. They wanted to be baptized, but their father’s opposition prevented that.

The day came when Narayan lay dying. Konduji lovingly held his father’s head in his lap as the old man gathered strength to make an astonishing confession. “Konduji, what you are doing is right. Your life has shown me how wrong I have been. I want your Jesus to take me into Heaven.”

With tears coursing down his cheeks, Konduji led his father in a prayer of repentance and submission. Narayan’s anger was replaced with the peace that entered his heart.

After Narayan’s death, all nine of the siblings, along with their spouses and other family members, were baptized. The transformation of the “robber clan” was

complete as they became the core of a small Nazarene church. Eventually, three of the brothers became pastors.

Konduji married Geeta, a devout Christian and a woman of prayer. Geeta was housemaid to the missionaries in Washim. She gave birth to 13 children and nurtured them in her love for Jesus. Her 11th child, Arvind, brought her much grief. He often scandalized Geeta and the family with his behavior. Arvind and his oldest brother resisted the call of God.

Arvind finished his education, married Shirin, a nurse, and became a physical education teacher. Then his older brother died, breaking Geeta’s heart. On her knees she cried out to God, “We gave our oldest son to you and now he is dead. Arvind is such a notorious son and is rebelling against You. What do we do?”

Arvind’s mother’s prayer brought him to his knees. He sobbed out his need for Jesus’ forgiveness and turned his life over to God.

Later he told his mother, “God has called me into the ministry. I must resign from teaching and Shirin will quit her nursing job. We will take our little Rajiv [11 months old] and go away to Bible school.”

The school term had already begun, but when Dr. Ira Cox, a doctor at the Nazarene hospital in Washim, contacted South India Biblical

WELL: SHPAKOV ENDURED 2-DAY ORDEAL

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Yuriy Shpakov is a bivocational Nazarene pastor in the Ukraine.

feeling I need a rubber hose lowered to where I was.”

At the time, the sky was still visible from his hole in the ground. He asked the people who were on the ground to lower him a hose, along with a thermos of tea and a packet of sandwiches. After these requests were fulfilled, the rubble moved and covered the hole completely. However, the space below the bucket remained and pastor Shpakov realized that the hose was his survival tool: he had oxygen coming through it and the hose was also a

communication “channel.”

While this all was happening, all efforts were thrown to find ways to save Shpakov from his concrete trap. The local emergency response people said they do not have experience with this kind of situation. A team with experience was found in Kyiv, the capital city, who set out for the four-hour journey to Gorodkivka where the accident happened.

The events were taking place in the middle of December and Shpakov says it was another miracle he did not freeze. Before getting into the well, he changed into his winter boots, but he was still wearing a light coat because there was not much space in the well to start with. However, due to the depth, the chill did not penetrate that far down.

As he stood before the pastors and delegates at the district assembly for the Ukraine & Moldova District, Shpakov chuckled, saying, “In a way, I wish for every pastor to go through something like this.” Everyone laughed along with him and said they would rather avoid something like that.

“Well, I do not wish anyone to get in a dangerous situation like mine, but it sure helps to gain perspective. I felt just as a person who is bound by sin or is in prison – helpless to change anything by himself – would feel.

“When I got trapped, I realized there was no space to stand. There was no space to lie down. There was only enough space to kneel. So I prayed,



Shpakov was rescued two days later from his underground ordeal. The experience brought him closer to God.

kneeling there, like Jonah inside the whale. There were issues I needed to stop and think about and I never had time. Now was my chance to reevaluate what was important for me.” After a 36-hour rescue operation, Shpakov was freed from his captivity.

“When God saves you from something like this, you take a look around and realize that God obviously has some purpose for you He has not yet fulfilled,” Shpakov concluded. ▼

INDIA: Arvind overcame asthma for seminary

from page 2

Seminary (SIBS), he received a quick reply. “We are praying for a school nurse. Send this couple right away; they are accepted.”

Many in the Christian community were skeptical he would go to seminary because of his reputation; was Arvind for real? On the day of their departure a large crowd gathered at the Washim railroad station to witness for themselves that Arvind would actually do this.

Upon reaching the campus, Arvind was attacked by asthma. His condition was so severe he grabbed a tablecloth to blow his nose. He sent word back to Washim: “This southern climate is

so disagreeable for me I cannot stay. I am either returning home or finding another school in the north.”

Geeta’s reply was emphatic: “Don’t come back! You have been given to God; you must stay and prepare to follow God’s call even though you die.”

They stayed three years. Arvind graduated with a degree in pastoral studies while Shirin attended to the health needs of the students.

During the next 13 years they pastored two established churches and planted four new churches. Their son, Sanjay, was born in 1976 and their daughter, Shradha, was born in 1980. In 1989 Arvind was appointed superintendent of the Central

Maharashtra District and moved to Chikhli where he and his family were put in a large bungalow that had been occupied for decades by missionary families. Even though this district was formed out of much of the original heart of the Nazarene work in India, Arvind’s leadership faced many challenges. The slow growth of the district was disappointing.

As Rajiv grew into his late teen years, he watched his father experience the joys and sorrows of pastoral and administrative leadership. Was this what God intended for him? His answer came in 1991 when he heard then World Mission Director Louie Bustle challenge

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SWEDEN: Fall event, Easter gallery draw guests

from page 1

registered with the Swedish tax authorities, “Arrie Kulturhus.” In October, Juliene, along with Ruth and Titi, two master’s level students from Ethiopia who temporarily lived with them, hosted a harvest festival for the neighborhood. The harvest festival was an opportunity for the neighbors to see inside of the historic buildings on the property, climb the silo staircase, play games, exchange fruit and vegetables from their own gardens, and learn about the dream to have a café and bed and breakfast in the old bakery, hardware and feed store. There were 25 in attendance. Everyone seemed to enjoy each other and the games. Those in attendance were supportive of the future hopes and enjoyed eating apple pies and cakes together in the café space.

Later, when Juliene realized 16 students and their parents lined up in front of the café space to wait for the school bus every school day, Juliene, Ruth and Titi started opening the door to offer a warm place out of the weather along with fresh coffee and hot chocolate. The neighborhood students were understandably shy about coming inside, but Juliene stood with them at the bus stop anyway. Even though the master’s students have now moved back to Ethiopia, Juliene waits with the neighborhood children for the bus each day, trying out her learned Swedish phrases and letting the children correct

her grammar and vocabulary. She also enjoys conversing with neighborhood parents.

In April, Juliene, along with her husband Phil, opened the old bakery for an art show, which is a tradition in Sweden called “Easter Art Round.” It was the second year that they participated in the custom. This time there were fewer art lovers to come out and see the Arrie Kulturhus galleries due to cold weather. This also affected the number of customers looking for cake and coffee, but Phil and Juliene enjoyed the extra time discipling a new believer in Jesus who was also the baker of the lovely cakes for the occasion. At night, and during slow times in the day, they read stories, played games and had an Easter egg hunt with the woman’s children.

Arrie Kulturhus has recently been approved as a mission site for Work & Witness teams. So Phil and Juliene are working toward obtaining approval from the community and state to do renovations with the help of the teams. They are praying that the Lord will continue to lead and to provide resources for teams to come and make the dream a reality.

“This place is about people, not coffee,” says Juliene. “We are thrilled for the opportunity to make friends and share faith whenever God gives us the opportunity. One person finding Christ is a rainbow of promise!” ▼



New house church, kindergarten in Albania

By Matt Lee

Eurasia Region Communications

The sanctuary can only seat 70 people, yet the Kombinat Church of the Nazarene runs close to 120 on any given Sunday.

“People leave because the place is packed,” said missionary Steve Beiler.

Beiler is the district superintendent in Albania, where Kombinat is located, and is faced with a “good problem” to have. He and others have come up with a viable solution that also has its share of difficulties.

A 30-minute drive from Kombinat (one hour if you have to travel by bus) lies a village of 2,000 people on the



A new church plant, growing out of a home-based kindergarten, may help to provide more space for worshipers from the overpacked Kombinat Church of the Nazarene to go and worship.

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PLANT: Kindergarten leads to Bible study

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outskirts of the larger town of Kamez. Rrok and Violeta Zefi, members of the Kombinat church, own a home and some property there. They felt led to start a kindergarten for children between the ages of 2 and 6 in their home.

The Zefis were fortunate enough to be able to build a second story onto their home, converting the first floor into the kindergarten while making the second floor their home.

This ministry is designed to help households in which both parents work. While some of the 18 children that attend get picked up at 1 or 1:30 p.m., most are there until 4:00pm.

During the course of ministering and meeting the needs of the people in their community another call came to them, they felt it was time to plant a new church and started a Bible study in their home about 8 months ago.

“It is always difficult to start something like this,” explained Beiler, “in a village setting of working the land everyday it’s hard for them to meet for a consistent Sunday morning [church] service.”

Though it was difficult, the group began to grow and soon a church was meeting on Sundays where the kindergarteners meet during the week.

It has been an exciting time in the life of the church.

“One person was saved two weeks ago and three more were saved last weekend,”



The Kombinat Church of the Nazarene seats about 70 people comfortably, but regularly sees about 120 in its Sunday worship services.

Beiler said. “People are getting saved almost on a weekly basis, at least four new believers in the last month.”

One of the district goals is to get churches to see the importance of working together and being unified in reaching the lost. He saw this as a great opportunity to try and strengthen the connection of the church plant and the church in Kombinat. There is already one thing the two churches have in common: “One of the district goals is to

work with poor people.

“Most of our churches, for instance, are assisting families with food and through this ministry, are being fed spiritually as well, leading many to salvation in Jesus’ name.”

With this shared vision, and people like Sonila Bejtja, more lives will be reached. Bejtja is on the church board in Kombinat and is also a district licensed minister. She has been willing to travel to Kamez to preach with the hopes that people from the overflowing church will also follow her to Kamez to make room for new people to attend in Kombinat, while also giving support to the new church plant.

“With prayer and fasting being the foundation of everything done on the district, unity, partnership, and working together are keys to building God’s Church in the lives of these villages,” Beiler said. “God is moving in the midst. We are learning, we keep moving forward in grace and power and see the difficulties are just distractions.” ▼

In a village outside Kamez, in Albania, a Nazarene couple followed God’s leading to start a kindergarten in their home, which then led to a Bible study. It is hoped this new church plant will be united in purpose and mission with the sister church in Kombinat.



INDIA: Four generations are faithful

from page 3

today's youth to become the pillars of tomorrow's church. The message struck into Rajiv's heart and he knew this was God's call.

Rajiv attended SIBS for three years, then pastored for three years, as a single man. He attended the 1997 General Assembly in San Antonio and remained in Texas where he enrolled in Dallas Theological Seminary. He returned to Chikhli in 1999 and again became pastor in Chikhli and later planted a new church in the nearby town of Khamgaon. He married Mona (Sophia) in 2000.

When Arvind retired as district superintendent in 2008, Rajiv was

surprised when the then field strategy coordinator, Ron Gilbert, came to him. "Rajiv, you show much promise and you have learned from your father. This is unusual, but we want you to step into your father's position."

Rajiv felt God leading him to accept the appointment. His sister, Shradha, and her husband, Nitin Saraf, had just graduated from SIBS and they assumed the Chikhli pastorate. When they were both ordained, Shradha was the first woman ordained on the district.

Rajiv's brother, Sanjiv, established Hallelujah English School next to the family's home in Chikhli, with more than

500 children enrolled. Income from the school helps support many pastors and other expenses on the district.

Every evening the three Yangad families and the Saraf family gather for family devotions in the large front room of their bungalow. They pray for seekers to be encouraged and new Christians to grow in their faith. After decades of slow growth, their district is sharing in the surge of people accepting Christ that is occurring across India. ▼

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*“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”
1 John 5-4 NIV*

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Prayer Requests

- Please pray for Phil and Juliene Munts and their family as they follow God's leading to gradually establish a cafe ministry in southern Sweden, and as they reach out to acquaintances and neighbors with the love of Jesus Christ. Ask God to bless and guide the development of their ministry.
- Thank God for the rescue of Pastor Yuriy Shpakov from the collapsed well, and continue to pray for his safety and that of other pastors and ministry workers across the Eurasia Region.
- Please pray for the ministry of the Yangad family in the Central Maharashtra District of India. Pray for God to continue pouring out His Holy Spirit across the pastors, leaders and churches of the district -- that they would courageously share God's love with those who don't yet know Jesus Christ.
- Please pray that God will continue blessing and expanding the Church across Albania through church plants, Bible studies and kindergarten ministry.

“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 mission workers across the region.

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

Dennis Mohn, Communications Coordinator

dmohn@eurasiaregion.org

Gina Pottenger, Editor in Chief
gpottenger@eurasiaregion.org

Gustavo Crocker, Regional Director
gcrocker@eurasiaregion.org

twitter

facebook

vimeo



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Eurasia Regional Office • Postfach 1217 • 8207 Schaffhausen, Switzerland
Phone (+49) 7734 93050 • Fax (+49) 7734 930550 • E-mail whereworldsmeet@eurasiaregion.org