

where WORLDS meet

the monthly newsletter for the church of the nazarene in eurasia

YEAR 12, ISSUE 9 • SEPTEMBER 2015

M+POWER NAZARENES TRAIN IN INDIA FOR MISSION



Twenty-one people from India and South Asia gathered in Bangalore this summer to attend the Eurasia Region's M+Power training, which helps potential volunteers and mentors prepare for cross-cultural volunteer service within the region.

By Balchand Shejule and Gina Pottenger
Special to Eurasia Region Communications

This summer, 21 potential M+Power volunteers from India and South Asia, along with a group of mentors and trainers, gathered in Bangalore, India, for a Eurasia Mission Orientation (EMO), where the group spent five days discovering what it means to serve cross-culturally; 16 interviewed for volunteer placement somewhere on the Eurasia Region.

Mobilization is one of the four regional priorities established by Rev. Arthur Snijders, Eurasia Region director, and Rev. Annemarie Snijders, the coordinator for the M+Power program, which implements the mobilization of volunteers in Eurasia.

This was the second training of its kind; the first was held for European Nazarenes at the Eurasia Region office in June. The purpose of these trainings is to help people explore a possible call to cross-cultural ministry, and train them for missionary assignments in their own nation and culture. The training of four

days was divided into two parts. In the first part, mentors underwent training; in the second part, the volunteers. A major portion of the training focused on effective communication on different levels, ranging from facts and world view to feelings and spirituality. Other topics included different ways of learning, cross-cultural adaptation, travel tips, how to share one's testimony without using Christian jargon, and the structure of the denomination.

"I always thought that everybody thought like me," said mentor Rev. Vijay. "M+Power helped me realize this was my myth. It helped me to see different worldviews through different colored glasses that people wear. Stories to help understand cross-cultural contexts were very helpful. Fundraising tips opened different ideas to prepare myself financially."

"I knew the culture is different in every part of the world. But after attending this orientation I was able to

realize the various aspects of a culture," said Miriam, a potential volunteer. "This training also helped to see from their glasses and how to find the points to build bridges. I also realized that working cross-culturally is a serious task but at the same time an opportunity to learn more."

One of the participants is about to embark on a mission opportunity in the Maldives, a group of islands near Sri Lanka. Others were ready to go out as volunteer missionaries as soon as possible.

"This is a real breakthrough, since the Church of the Nazarene has been in India for over 100 years, and until now, there have been two to four missionaries being sent by India," said Annemarie Snijders. "During the EMO there were at least six people that were ready and motivated to go out and serve either in India or in South Asia." □

Learn more about M+Power or apply at www.eurasiaregion.org/volunteers

Denomination leaders urge refugee response

As the war in Syria stretches into its fifth year, the number of people who have had to flee their homes due to violence or persecution has reached 12 million — half of them children — according to the United Nations. The number of Syrians who have become refugees in other countries has reached 4 million since 2011.

Add to those numbers another 15.5 million refugees who have had to flee war, violence and persecution in other countries, including Afghanistan and Somalia. As the number of refugees worldwide who are fleeing to countries in Europe continues to increase, experts are calling this the greatest refugee crisis since World War II.

During this crisis, the Board of General Superintendents is calling on the Church of the Nazarene to respond.

“Nazarenes are among those who have had to flee their countries to escape violent conflict,” they wrote in a letter to the church. “Nazarenes are also among those who have had to flee because faith in Jesus has put their lives in danger. And Nazarenes are among those who have been ministering to refugee families who are seeking safety and hope.”

The message continues, “Prayer is always our first response. ... Our next response is to give generously.”

The denomination is working through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries to support ministry to refugees through local churches.

In Hungary, Nazarenes have been providing food, blankets and tents for refugee families stuck in transit both in Budapest and Roszke on the Hungarian/Serbian border. Now that the border has closed, a team of Nazarenes on the ground in Serbia is partnering with another church to meet emergency

needs of refugees there, according to Teanna Sunberg, a missionary living in Budapest, Hungary. Nazarenes in Croatia are also responding as the tide of refugees has shifted there.

Leaders from local churches and church plants in Germany, the United Kingdom and other European countries receiving refugees are currently formulating plans for how to minister to refugees who arrive in their communities, according to Tim Bowen-Evans, international program coordinator for Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

Nazarene churches in the Middle East have been ministering to refugees and displaced families from Syria and other countries affected by war and persecution since 2011. Locally led outreach efforts include providing food, supplies, medical care and resettlement support. While the number of refugees entering countries in Europe, including those from Syria, has increased significantly this summer, the majority of the 4 million Syrian refugees are in countries that neighbor Syria, including Lebanon and Jordan.

Nazarene schools in the Middle East have also been providing scholarships for hundreds of refugee children from Syria and other neighboring countries. Rod Green, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries coordinator in the Middle East, reports that Nazarene schools in the Middle East will provide education and stability for 600 children affected by war and persecution in the next year.

One of the greatest concerns for children in areas affected by war and persecution is gaps in education — children often lose years of education because going to school is either too dangerous or simply not an option due to poverty conditions caused by war. Nearly 2.7 million children in Syria are not in

school, according to USAID, and those numbers do not include Syrian children who are living as refugees in other countries.

“During this crisis, we remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 25: ‘... I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,’” the BGS wrote. “We are asking our global church family to pray and minister to those in need.” □

How to Respond

Pray

Ask God to give wisdom to leaders and congregations as they minister to refugees in Jesus’ name. Pray for healing for children and adults who have been traumatized by violence or persecution. Pray for God’s presence to be felt and a spirit of peace to reign.

Give

Churches and individuals around the world can support efforts to minister to refugee families through local Nazarene churches by giving to the NCM Refugee and Immigrant Support Fund at ncm.org.

In Germany, please donate through Helping Hands e.V., IBAN: DE56 5075 0094 0000 022394, SWIFT-BIC: HELADEF1GEL.

For other countries, please give through your local church or district, designating your gift to the NCM Refugee and Immigrant Support Fund.

By NCM, reprinted from Nazarene.org.

See page 7 of this newsletter for a link to a booklet with guidelines for how to help refugees in your area.



'We are the light of the world'

A Nazarene from Nazareth

By
Gina Grate
Pottenger



YOUR STORY
OUR STORY
GOD'S STORY

Nizar Touma likes to say he's a real Nazarene, by birth, in addition to being a Nazarene by church membership.

Growing up in Nazareth, in Israel, Touma was raised by his parents in the Greek Orthodox Church. Yet, he says they were not serious about their faith, practicing it only as a tradition, not a personal relationship with God.

Touma also participated in the traditions of the church as a youth, but was not a believer in Jesus Christ.

"Until I was 18 or 19, I never thought about my eternal life," he said.

Just after finishing high school, a friend invited Touma to attend a prayer meeting at a Nazarene church. An American minister named Lindell Browning was there and preached. Touma enjoyed the atmosphere and the activities; they were novel and different from what he was used to. As he began attending regularly, he also took an interest in reading the Bible. He was surprised by what he found in it, and wondered why he had never read it before.

One day, during one of the worship meetings, the minister asked if anyone in the room wanted to open their hearts to Jesus and change their lives, and invited them to walk up to the front. Touma was a very shy person, usually sitting in the back, and instead of going forward, he

rushed home. But once he was alone, he fell to his knees and wept over his sins, confessing to God all the wrong things he had done – things he had never before considered wrong, because everyone did them.

"The next morning, I opened my window and I saw everything out there was new. A big light was shining. It's like [I was] someone who discovered a new world. I suddenly thought, 'I was just now born.'"

He went to work and the men he worked with asked him what was wrong,

**"It's like I was
someone who
discovered a new
world."**

-- Nizar Touma

and noted that something in his face was different. Touma began talking to his coworkers about what God had done in his heart and that God had made him a new person.

Surprisingly, his parents were unhappy with his change. They told him that if he continued going to the evangelical church, he should move out of their house. But he was stubborn and said that was fine with him. Gradually,

they accepted his new relationship with God.

During the first year of his new faith, he brought many friends to the church and naturally began to take leadership of the youth group, helping to lead worship and sing.

Two years later, in 1987, Touma enrolled in theological education in Cyprus.

"My heart was jumping out. My heart was to serve, to give up everything. In 1985 was the year when you finish high school, you're like, 'There is the world, I'm going to overtake it.' You want to go out and find your future. So in my mind was: get a good job, continue studying, get a wife, get married, have a family. All that was in front of me."

However, God pushed all those desires from his heart and mind, and he soon cared only about serving God. He began assisting Browning in leading the Nazarene church in Jerusalem. After he was ordained, Touma took over as pastor for almost 10 years.

In 2000, Touma felt God leading him back to his hometown of Nazareth. This was not what Touma wanted. He argued and argued with God and, to avoid the calling, even went out to get an office job with Campus Crusade for Christ (now known as CRU).

"But God's voice never left me," he

see "NAZARENE" • page 5

German mission team joins Armenian Nazarenes to establish micro business

By Dorli Gschwandtner



Can a rusty old container be transformed into a first-class chicken paradise in ten days?

The 2015 paXan team tried it out. And this is what it took to effect the transformation: Ten motivated young adults working alongside their Armenian friends, the above-mentioned old container, many cups of good Armenian coffee, 25 plates of Styrofoam, 15 new metal sheets, a large amount of screws and nails, some buckets of paint, a few bags of cement and a pile of Armenian block, some used wood planks, a fence with a gate, a crane, a few sets of German tools, and lots of humour, laughter and good spirits.

The paXan team arrived in Armenia on August 14. paXan is an annual Work & Witness trip for young adults from Germany; the name is derived from the Latin word for peace and a German phrase meaning "Let's do it!" The team was warmly welcomed by the local Nazarene church near Gyumri in north-western Armenia. As Pastor Seyran had already prepared everything necessary for their work, the team got busy right away.

Over the course of the next 10 days, the young adults stripped the outside of the container, repaired a partly decayed corner including the roof, inserted new insulation, covered the entire container in zinc-coated metal sheets, fixed the interior and painted it, cut a door for the chickens and built a fenced enclosure on the outside.



Ten young adult volunteers from Germany joined efforts with Armenian Nazarenes to transform a shipping container into a chicken coop, for the church's microbusiness enterprise.

This project is part of a larger Food Resource Bank project which helps local families to set up a chicken or sheep business in order to earn enough income to provide for their needs.

Armenia is a country facing a number of economic challenges like unemployment and migration that cause many families to live in poverty. Especially the northwest of the country is still economically unstable after a terrible earthquake that devastated the region in 1988. Thousands of young and older Armenians leave their home every year to find jobs abroad.

To give new opportunities to impoverished local families and reduce outmigration, the Food Resource Bank project was started by Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM) three years ago. The local church is heavily involved and recently decided that they

also wanted to start a chicken business to be better equipped to serve their town.

The paXan team stayed in the local Nazarene church for 10 days to help them transform the container, which is a relic of earthquake times, into a chicken house, a task that was accomplished to everyone's satisfaction around noon on the last day of the team's stay. Of course, the team wasn't only there to work, but also to form friendships and spend quality time with the people of the church and community.

From Monday to Friday, the church offered a Vacation Bible School to approximately 60 children from the community. The paXan team joined in the singing, crafts, games and sports and greatly enjoyed serving alongside and learning from their very professional Armenian friends. "The kids program

NAZARENE: Church grows through prayer, fasting

continued from page 3

said. “The voice of the Lord (was), ‘I called you to be a shepherd, I didn’t call you to be in administration.’”

His wife, Katie, heard clearly from God, as well. She had prayed that if God wanted them to relocate to Nazareth for ministry, that He would cause a dove to come and land on their window within the next 10 minutes. When she next turned her face to the window, the dove was sitting there. It shocked her so greatly that she called her husband, hysterical and unable to talk coherently.

Finally accepting the clear direction of the Lord, they called Browning and told him they were ready to go back to Nazareth, where a pastor

from Northern Ireland, named Henry Stephenson, had been leading the church. He remained to help the Toumas adjust to the ministry and then he moved away.

Now, Touma says he does not regret the move. “I think when you are in the will of God, you are in the right place. It’s my joy, actually. If it was not for the calling to be in Nazareth, I would not be there. It’s so challenging. But God has used us in a miraculous way.”

When Touma arrived, the church was seeing attendance under 50. He asked the congregation to fast and pray with him for eight days. Afterward, they saw people who were healed from sicknesses and diseases. Some families

were restored from broken relationships. Encouraged by seeing God powerfully at work to heal and transform people, they implemented prayer and fasting as a regular practice of the church. The church members fast all day every Wednesday, then meet for two hours of prayer for the situations in the Middle East, for refugees, for the Body of Christ and also the Nazarene denomination. They also fast annually for a week over Easter.

The Nazarene church in Nazareth is flourishing. The attendance at the church is over 200 people, but their influence reaches well over 300. They have a preschool which allows them to minister

to children from several different religious backgrounds while funding the overall work of the church.

They also started a large yard sale where they sell cheap items, which allows them to buy food supplies for local needy families and also to distribute Bibles in Gaza, including a solar-charged audio Bible.

The congregation, which is mostly Arab by ethnicity, delivered Christmas gifts and sweets to a Jewish orphanage.

Touma said that his church has reached people from a variety of backgrounds, including atheism.

Touma has a heart for reconciliation between Arab believers and Messianic

“In the Middle East, we are a minority. But we have the effect of the salt on a good meal. We have that effect because we are the salt of the earth. We are the light of the world.” – Nizar Touma



believers, trying to build bridges between Arab and Jewish pastors. He occasionally invites Jewish pastors to preach in his church, and has also preached in some Messianic congregations.

“In the Middle East, we are a minority,” he said. “But I feel like we have the effect of the salt on a good meal. We have that effect of the salt because we are the salt of the earth. We are the light of the world. If we believe that something must happen, it’s a must.” □

ARMENIA: Teams worked, fellowshiped and shared

continued from page 4

in Armenia was amazing,” said Alexander Schulz, one of the paXan team participants. “The kids behaved remarkably well and you could see the enthusiasm with which they participated, whether it was the worship songs, the games or just listening to the Bible stories. That gives hope for the future generation of this country and I think they can help to improve this country.”

The team also went on a few trips with the local young adults and participated in two Sunday services.

Many evenings of talking and laughing together allowed the young people of both countries to enjoy fellowship, share and learn from each other, both culturally and spiritually.

“I came to Armenia without any knowledge or connection with this country,” Schulz pointed out. “Now I know a lot about the culture, I made new friends and I could get a feeling of living in this country. I’m happy we could help them.”

And Elias Nebel, another team

member, added: “We had a lot of good conversations with the Armenians about all sorts of topics including being a Christian and about their country. This gave us the opportunity to grow in our own spiritual life and personality. The cross-cultural interaction did us good and we met lots of new friends. I was really excited about the fact that we are all connected through our faith in Christ.” □



M+POWER
EURASIA



IS GOD CALLING YOU?

Become a missionary in the Eurasia Region!

Find out more and apply now.

To explore your call or train for missionary assignment,
visit the website.

www.eurasiaregion.org/volunteers

*“I needed clothes
and you clothed me,
I was sick and you
looked after me, I
was in prison and
you came to visit
me.”*
— Matthew 25:36

Do you have pictures of your church ministry in Eurasia that you would like to share with the region? Send them to communications@eurasiaregion.org and we'll consider posting them on our Facebook page.

www.eurasiaregion.org

Tips for helping refugees

As a tidal wave of people moving from the Middle East engulfs Europe, many Nazarenes are asking how they and their local churches can practice hospitality by effectively ministering to the complex needs of these relocating people.

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM) has provided a booklet with a wide range of ideas for how local churches can organize to meet numerous practical needs of immigrants, from low-investment to medium- and high-investment involvement.

Some tips include giving immigrants an orientation tour of the new city where they find themselves; offering language classes; or providing safe spaces for displaced people to visit during daytime hours.

The booklet also describes ways to be culturally sensitive to the religious and gender differences of people coming from the Middle East, as well as the particular needs of those fleeing war zones and traumatic experiences.

The booklet urges churches to involve

a refugee or asylum seeker from the community to identify needs and plan the church's response.

To access this booklet, visit <http://www.eurasiaregion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Responding-to-Refugee-Crisis-version-4.9.15.docx>

Feel free to circulate it within your local churches and districts.

To give to the work of NCM and local churches who are serving Middle East refugees across the Eurasia Region, visit <http://www.ncm.org/refugees.html>. □



Prayer Requests

- Please pray the millions of people displaced by war and violence in the Middle East. Ask God to bring peace to these areas, and safety to the people. Pray also for the countries that are receiving them, that they can identify resources to help them start new lives and support their families. Pray for the Church around the world as it seeks the most effective ways to show God's love to these people.
- Please pray for those who attended the recent Eurasia Mission Orientation in India; ask God to help lead and guide those who are called to cross-cultural ministry, to find the right opportunity to serve, and the resources necessary to answer the call. Pray for God to continue calling Eurasia Nazarenes into volunteer service in His mission.
- Pray for the new small business being started by the church in Armenia. Ask God to bless its efforts and make it prosper, so the church can be a blessing to its community.
- 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

Gina Pottenger, Comm. Coordinator
gpottenger@eurasiaregion.org

Randolf Wolst, Website Designer
rwolst@eurasiaregion.org

Arthur Snijders, Regional Director
awsnijders@eurasiaregion.org

twitter

facebook

vimeo



Transforming Our World: In Christ • Like Christ • For Christ

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