

where WORLDS meet

the monthly newsletter for the church of the nazarene in eurasia

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VISION 2020

CIS Field embraces
• challenge to
• double in 15 years



A new house group is meeting in L'viv, Ukraine, in the west of the country where there are no Nazarene churches. The new work is being planted by local pastor family Oleg and Ira Kuz, with support from CIS Field Strategy Coordinator Scott and Jenny Rainey. L'viv is one of four locations in the CIS where the church is pioneering new work in the next year. The goal is to double the number of churches and members in the CIS Field in the next 15 years.

By Gina Grate Pottenger
Eurasia Region Communications

What would it look like to double the number of Nazarene churches in the CIS Field (Commonwealth of Independent States) in the next 15 years?

So far, it's looking like families moving into cities and countries where the denomination does not yet have a presence, and in some cases drawing on the experience and insights of other churches and groups who have already been at work there for a long time.

20-20 vision

In 2015, the denomination's six general superintendents met with Nazarene field strategy coordinators from around the world and, during

one session, presented statistics that demonstrated the denomination has doubled in size every 15 years since it was first organized more than a century ago.

"What would it look like if we're doubled by 2030?" asked Jerry Porter, general superintendent. Field Strategy Coordinator Scott Rainey remembers Porter then pointing out that, in some areas of the world, the Nazarene church is expanding well ahead of that pace. That's when Porter threw out a challenge: "What if we doubled in five years – by 2020?"

Rainey had been sitting there with a pencil, writing down figures for what the

see "VISION" • page 2

PRAYER UNITES UK CHURCH

By Ted Voigt
United Kingdom

A young, single pastor on his first assignment in a church of families, teens, children and elderly members has succeeded using prayer to unify the wide range of parishioners who dress differently, listen to different music, work, eat, and play differently.

In the Cramlington, England, Church of the Nazarene, that happens in the prayer room.

"One of our success stories has been our House of Prayer," says Ben Goodwin, the 25-year-old pastor of Cramlington.

He opens the church to the public for prayer from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. every Thursday, providing a space for people to come and pray, with stations for contemplation, prompts for prayer, and an area to write requests.

"We started in November of last year and we said we need to commit to this ... for two years," he said. "If people can commit to a phone contract for two

see "PRAYER" • page 4

Inside this issue:

Pg. 3: Couple empowered to serve out of their own suffering

Pg. 5: Nazarenes link arms to run for refugees

Pg. 6: Are you ready for the annual thank offering for missions?

VISION: 44 new works in 15 years is the goal

continued from page 1

CIS Field would look like with double the number of current churches. It would go from 44 local congregations to 88, and from more than 1,500 attendees to more than 3,000. Currently, there are Nazarene churches in six countries in the CIS; Rainey thought about expanding to be present in a total of 12 countries.

Just the year before, when Rainey had stepped into leadership for CIS, he met with the district superintendents and learned that the youngest church had been planted seven years before. But the leaders expressed a strong desire to grow again.

Rainey returned to his field after hearing about Vision 2020 and met with the leaders again.

“We prayed, we talked; I had them begin to pinpoint where they think we could be in their district in terms of numbers: attendance, membership, number of churches and number of countries that we’re in. These were the categories of particular interest to me.

“I asked them to make faith projections for their district: By faith where do they see us by 2030? I was shocked at how close their added faith projections were to the ones for the field. We were looking at doubling in size – by faith – in 15 years, which basically says this to me: we don’t want the fast-growing places in the world to make up for our lack of growth.”

Their short-term goal was to add 16 churches by 2020, starting with four new churches in the first year.

God going before

And, it’s happening. In some ways, it seems God was orchestrating all of this before Rainey ever heard about 2020. Four families were already sensing that God was calling them into pioneer places to plant churches.

- Ukrainian family Oleg and Ira Kuz felt God was leading them to plant a church in L’viv, in the western part of Ukraine where there

is no Nazarene church. Rainey and his family also sensed a burden to be involved in church planting, and at the Kuz’s invitation agreed to relocate and partner with them in the endeavor.

- Davide and Tatiana Cantarella, long-time leaders in Moscow, Russia, and throughout the CIS through theological education, had been feeling drawn to a new country where the Church of the Nazarene has no presence. Through an exploratory trip and numerous meetings with Christian leaders there, their family is now planning to relocate in January 2017.

- Another couple has relocated this summer to a sensitive area in the CIS to begin developing relationships and support local believers, with the hope of starting Nazarene work in their new city.
- On the other side of Russia, a South Korean family is moving to Vladivostok, where they felt God was calling them to plant a church.

Additionally, field leaders have chosen two locations to plant churches in 2017: Chisinau, Moldova, to start a Romanian-speaking congregation; and Georgia, where a couple from outside the Eurasia Region has agreed to establish Nazarene presence.

“Our Father drives us forward

because he loves those people – the ones who have been reached and the ones who haven’t been,” said one of the church planters in the sensitive area. “These people are loved and this message is transformational.”

Hard soil

Behind all of these developments is the shadow of restrictive government legislation in several CIS countries, which limits evangelism to very specific settings and contexts, and makes it difficult to register the church in new areas.

“We should not expect any help from the legislators sitting in those parliaments,” said Davide Cantarella. “This is going to happen because of hard work and total commitment. I think it’s a reality that the doubling of churches can happen [but] it will take a commitment that maybe has not been there before.”

Rainey and Cantarella described how, in the first 20 years of religious freedom after the Communist government collapsed across the former Soviet Union, people were fascinated with Christianity, and any church that was opened flourished and grew.

“We have enjoyed incredible freedom, but also a rising in materialism and a lack of interest in any religious message,” Cantarella said.

As a result, several countries have been tightening their control over religious activity.

When meeting with established Christian leaders in one of the new countries to find out what they knew about ministry there, Rainey said

“We don’t want the fast growing places in the world to make up for our lack of growth.”

-- Scott Rainey, CIS Field coordinator



'God put us in a place to use us.'

Shaped by suffering

By Gina Grate
Pottenger

Adil* and Karima* had just finished a prayer meeting at their home and had put their children to bed when they decided to have tea together. Karima went into the kitchen and stoked the fire to boil the water. A gust of wind blew suddenly through the window, causing the flames to light her clothes on fire.

"I'm burning!" she screamed and, in a panic, ran outside into the street. Adil rushed after her and threw a blanket on her to suffocate the flames. But the damage was done.

At the hospital, medical personnel said that she sustained fatal burns on the delicate skin from the neck down, and across her stomach.

"They said, 'Tomorrow you can take her. She's dying,'" Adil remembers.

Adil and his uncle, who had started training him in Christian ministry when he was just a boy, prayed at the hospital. Gradually, they both sensed God's assurance that Adil's wife would not die.

But God didn't promise them her recovery would be easy. It was a long and painful journey for Karima – and for Adil, who helplessly watched his wife suffer. She came and went from hospitals for three years. Some people told the family to allow her to come home and die.

While she was still recuperating, Adil received a word from God: Just as in Genesis 12 where God told Abram to

move his family to another land, God was now telling Adil to take his family to the nearby nation of Jordan. Adil didn't even know where Jordan was.

When he told friends that God was sending his family to Jordan, they responded that he was crazy. His wife was still not well. So the couple prayed and fasted for six months. Their certainty only grew. It was confirmed when they received an invitation to come to Jordan.

With their two children and 15 coins in hand, they arrived in a new land. An

**"We believe that
church has to go
out, not stay in."**

-- Adil*

acquaintance allowed them to take one room in his two-room home.

"It was very, very cold, we thought it was the end of the world," Adil recalled. "It was much different than [our home country]. We took the kids and we started crying together. What can we do?"

Despite their misery, they obediently stayed for one year, then moved to another city in Jordan where they began to attend a Nazarene church.

"They gained the church's respect and eventually they started to take part in ministry," says a local church leader*.

Adil found work in a cancer center at a hospital. Although chaplaincy is not allowed in Jordan, in his administrative role he had many opportunities to share Jesus with people, including some who were dying.

"He was like an angel there," says the local church leader*.

Adil also studied theology at the Nazarene Bible College. After 11 years serving with the church in Jordan, he was ordained as a Nazarene pastor.

"When God told us to go to Jordan, we didn't know if we are coming here to work or make money," Karima said. "But God put us in a place to use us, to shape us."

Following more than a decade of serving in Jordan, the family sensed God releasing them to return home. They relocated to a city where they had no contacts. One day a man from the utilities company came to their home to check the water meter. Adil introduced himself and boldly asked the man if he was a Christian. The man was not, but was very interested in what Adil had to say. After an hour of conversation, the man invited Adil to his home.

Adil and Karima visited the man's family and realized his wife worked with Karima in the school. The family eagerly accepted Christ, and the two couples began a Bible study. Soon, the faith group grew to four families.

SHAPED: Couple ministers to businesses, families

continued from page 3

The couple's ministry since then has become multi-faceted, including house group planting and discipleship of believers, ministry to the sick, marriage counseling and children's work.

"We believe that the church has to go out, not stay in," Adil said. "God led me to some factories. I met some leaders of the factories. They already knew the Lord. I said to them, 'Do you want your factory to grow more?' They said, 'Of course.' I said, 'You have to build an altar for the Lord.' And we agreed with this."

The managers of one factory held an hour of worship and praise time, and a Bible study. The company quickly expanded, requiring a second factory to be built.

Where Adil and Karima live, there are 800 small villages surrounding them. They go with a team of ministry workers to the villages where there are no churches, and lead some to Christ, then

disciple them.

They met at least five couples who were planning to divorce, but through counseling, the couples regained loving relationships and built altars to the Lord in their homes.

Karima started a Sunday school for children in one of the villages.

"During Sunday school one boy was feeling dizzy and he fainted," Karima recalled. "We asked him 'What's wrong? Are you sick?' He said, 'It's not my turn in my house to have breakfast today.' From that time, God led us to a mercy ministry [to the poor]."

Sometimes, the family uses their own funds to help people in need. More importantly, they are encouraging the poor themselves to share. For instance, some of the families receive small food packages from the government, including staples like sugar, oil and rice. They ask the families to give up one portion from their packages, and Adil and Karima

deliver these items to families in even more urgent need. When they brought some of the donated foods to one elderly woman, she asked them what was inside. They said it had rice, sugar, tea and chicken. The woman lit up at the news, saying that for three months she had not been able to afford any kind of meat.

They also persuaded some doctors to provide medical care to some of the poor families at a lower price.

"God raised Karima from death," Adil said. "We know what it means when you say, 'I am in pain.' If there's anyone sick or feeling tired, we feel he is part of our family.

"We praise the Lord for this work in our life that we are part of the work of God. We are just dust, and nothing. I pray that He can continue to use us." □

**Name changed and location omitted for security reasons.*

PRAYER: Prayer room open Thursdays for drop-bys

continued from page 1

years, the church should definitely be able to commit to prayer for two years."

After six months, the House of Prayer is going strong. Goodwin said people stop in before or after work, bringing their friends and colleagues along. Parents come to pray for their kids. People leave requests, pray for the community, and for many people, they find a place of peace.

"People have a vision of what church would look like, but they come into this

place and they leave with just a sense of peace, a sense that there is a God," he said, "... and that there's someone willing to pray for them as well."

Goodwin said the weekly prayer time spans the generations of his congregation. Older members come early to their study group to spend time in prayer, for example.

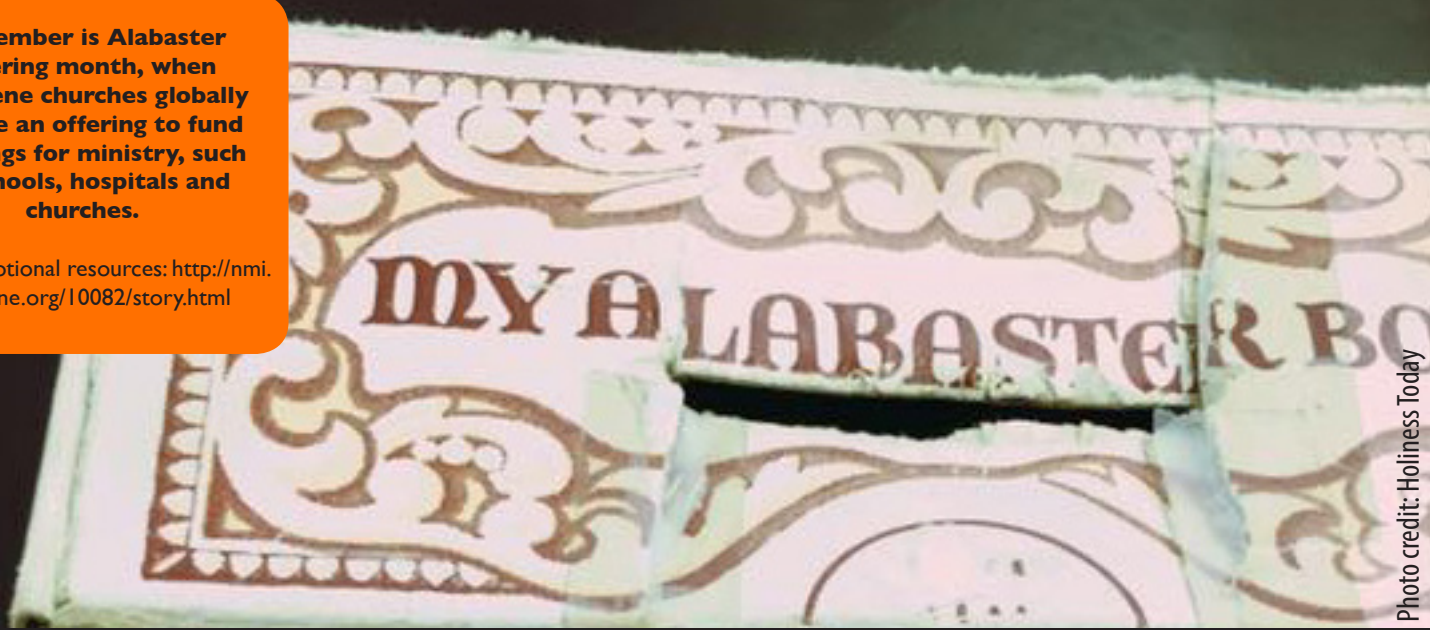
"A lot of young pastors, they think the older people are against them, that they won't want to do anything they come up

with," he said. "But I think that group of people, they're my biggest support club, and I know they pray for me every day."

While Pastor Goodwin looks ahead to the places where the church needs to go next, he knows that no matter what they may think, his congregation is praying — especially on Thursdays. □

September is Alabaster Offering month, when Nazarene churches globally receive an offering to fund buildings for ministry, such as schools, hospitals and churches.

Find promotional resources: <http://nmi.nazarene.org/10082/story.html>



Running for refugees

Nazarenes link arms across the miles to fund education for Syrian children

By Teanna Sunberg
Central Europe Communications

On a warm morning in April, more than 2,500 kilometers away from Beirut, Lebanon, a handful of Nazarenes from Germany, Bulgaria, Moldova, Russia, America, and Ukraine joined 15,000 participants at the 'START' line of a track in Kyiv, Ukraine. Despite their diversity, the Nazarenes shared one common goal - they were running to raise \$7,000 for the Agape Table Project, which provides hot meals to the children of the Beirut Nazarene School. The group surpassed their goal to raise \$9,000 for the project.

The 50 children who attend the Beirut Nazarene school belong to refugee families from the civil war in Syria. Because of their refugee status, they cannot attend a Lebanese school. To minister to children traumatized by their war-torn past, the Nazarene Church in Beirut has been providing school and meals for the children over the past year. In October 2015, the ministry was running out of funds. Pastor Andrew Salameh was struggling with the reality that he would have to tell teachers, children and parents that the doors of the school were closing. In the very midst of those dark moments, an email arrived, bringing hope.

Tanya Cantarella, a Nazarene pastor in Russia, contacted Pastor Salameh with the idea of having a team of Nazarenes that would run in a Kyiv half-marathon to raise funds. She committed that all monies raised would go to Agape Table. It was a lifeline for the Beirut school.

Running for a reason

Last November, sitting together at Eurasia Regional Conference, the Cantarella and Sukanen families, both serving in the CIS (Commonwealth



of Independent States) Field, began to discuss an idea. Less than six months from that night, Kyiv was scheduled to host a marathon. What if the families would commit to run in the event together? Everyone at the table was willing except for Tanya's husband, Davide. Running in an organized race was not an activity that he would do for recreation alone. The question was posed to Davide, "What cause would be important enough for you to run?"

He responded, "I would run if it helped Syrian refugee children." Inspired by that answer, the Nazarene runners joined together to raise money for the Agape Table Project.

It was at the same conference

that Tanya found one of the key members of the running team: Cindy Phelps, who is serving with her husband, Dick, in Varna, Bulgaria. Now in retirement, the Phelps have made a home as Mission Corps volunteers in Bulgaria's seaside city.

Soon, the team of runners were well on their way to meeting their projected goal and their group of runners was growing in numbers and diversity. Tanya connected with friends and colleagues to raise awareness of the refugee situation. As she and her Italian husband, Davide, trained for the marathon during

Moscow's harsh winter, neither the snow, or ice, or sickness managed to stop the couple, who are also parents, from training. The Sukanens, Mission Corps volunteers in Moldova, organized logistics for the team.

Team effort

Meanwhile, the Phelps in Varna were getting the word out to friends in the U.S., hoping to stir hearts. Cindy, a child psychologist for 30 years, knew that research demonstrates children cannot learn without proper nutrition. Phelps said the Agape Table Project is an example of the church going back to the roots of Christianity by providing for the social needs of their society.

When the day of the race dawned, there were 16 Nazarenes runners amid the 15,000 participants competing in the race. As a team, they were a large presence showing their unity and cause with matching shirts that said, "AGAPE TABLE PROJECT".

The team was well supported on the sidelines by CIS Field Strategy Coordinator Scott Rainey, his wife Jenni and their two daughters; Linda Russell from the CIS; Pastor Vladimir and Sylvia Masyuk, Kyiv pastor; and Phelps's husband, Dick. People were present filling various roles: Moldova church planter, Sergey Talalai, who is Ukrainian, brought his Moldovan youth group to Kyiv to be a part of the event.

When asked why she chose to participate in the Kyiv marathon as a way to support the Agape Table Project, Phelps said, "Everybody can do something, you just have to have the desire in your heart."

All from Him

"But remember the
Lord your God."

Deuteronomy 8:18a



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“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”
1 John 5:14 (NIV)

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Send us your story ideas, too!

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2020: Laws present challenge

continued from page 2

the leaders were very glad to have the partnership of another Christian denomination, but were honest about the difficulty of working there.

Rainey recalls the local leaders said: “We’ve been praying and we sense that something new is happening in [our country], and your coming is like evidence that God is starting something fresh here and we welcome you. We’ll work with you.”

Yet one of the national Christian leaders cautioned, “In 1994, soon after the fall of the Soviet Union, we worked really hard to plant churches in [our country] and in that year we planted 30 churches. And this year, in 2015, we

worked really hard to plant churches, just as hard as we did in 1994, and we planted one church.”

Rainey believes the Church of the Nazarene in the CIS Field will embrace the challenge.

“Once people see their leaders doing this – the commitment and perseverance to make steps to plant new cities and churches – I believe local churches will begin to get that passion again,” Rainey said. “People will begin to be bold. They’ll say, ‘Why don’t our group of 10 people start trying to plant a church?’ We hope this will become a church planting movement. We could far exceed our goal.” □

RACE: Raised \$9,000 for refugees

continued from page 5

As the day of races came to a close, weary but elated athletes came together for a celebratory ceremony and the Nazarene team received a baton for participating. Addressing the crowd,

Kyle Sukanen spoke for the group, “We did our part of the race, now we pass the baton to the people in Beirut. Continue the race.” □

Prayer Requests

- Please pray for the Church of the Nazarene across the CIS Field, as it implements the plan to double the number of churches and members in the next 15 years, and expand to six new countries. Ask God to call families and individuals to pioneer these works, and to open doors and hearts in new places.
- Please pray for *Adil and *Karima as they lead Nazarene work in their country. Ask God to protect them, to lead them people who are open to knowing Jesus personally, and to provide them resources for serving the poor. Pray for a movement of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for the church and school in Beirut as they serve the desperate needs of Syrian refugees locally, especially education and meals for children. Ask God to provide His abundant resources to meet these needs, and for hearts to open to Him.
- Pray for churches across Eurasia to make prayer and fasting a core discipline in their individual and corporate lives.

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

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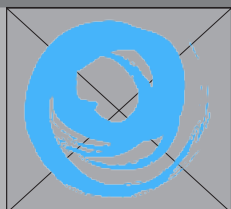
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