



where WORLDS meet



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Christmas Greetings from Eurasia



By Arthur Snijders
Eurasia Regional Director

"I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way." Mark 8:2-3

This Christmas will find many in our vast region in times of great need and little resources. Jesus looked at the people and saw that they were hungry to the point of collapsing on the way. We in Eurasia have witnessed this kind of need, among refugees, among children and elderly, among families and our churches.

Our pastors, workers, and church members have been hard pressed because of war and conflicts, harsh economic circumstances, persecution and costly opposition. Christmas 2016 is a time of not having enough, of going short, of not able to shield those we love from the

harshness of the world.

Nazarenes of Eurasia Region, listen! Christ our Lord and Messiah has compassion for all those who have nothing to eat, and who are in danger of falling by the roadside out of sheer exhaustion and desperation. He does not turn His head away. He sees. He understands. He cares deeply. He tells us His disciples: "I have compassion for these people!"

His is a fierce spirituality.

Yet in our time of need we are called to deep and fierce faith in our heavenly Father.

When I was in a time of hunger myself during the year the Spirit directed my attention to Moses' words concerning Israel's journey through the desert, "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had

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SIGNS: Helping deaf children find forever homes

By Zee Gimon
CIS Field Communications

When Moscow First Church of the Nazarene, Russia, began welcoming deaf and hard-of-hearing people into the congregation, members became later aware that deaf and hard-of-hearing children in a local orphanage were not adopted as readily as the hearing children, and couldn't even communicate with their caregivers at the orphanage. Tatiana "Tanya" Cantarella, pastor, and missionary in the CIS Field, decided it was time to do something about that.

To more effectively communicate with the 15 or so hearing impaired people attending Moscow First, Tanya and several other church members had

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known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word, that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deut.8:3 NIV).

The Spirit of the compassionate Christ seemed to whisper: "The needs of the region and fields are to become tools in the hands of your Lord, rather than just adverse circumstances or difficult times."

Don't forget: The Lord caused us to hunger. I think that we in our churches are learning again that the way of holiness calls for deeper answers, which only God can provide. So, the Lord strips away much of what we rely on and considered a strength or resource, humbling us.

In tears one of our leaders confessed before the participants in the refugee conference: "Yes, we need to open our hearts and give all of ourselves to those in need, but it really, really hurts." No room for cheap answers in our region! No Christmas fairy tales that leave us hungry, without strength and hope for eternal life.

Our Eurasia context cries out for true holiness, in which Christ is meeting harsh Eurasia realities. God's Word spoken is the only resource that sustains us and gives us courage for the journey.

This year Annemarie and I have witnessed Nazarenes prayerfully share food, time, love to many in order to

provide hope in Christ. We have seen the loaves and fishes being broken, shared and multiplied. Christ is compassionate and able to do more than we can ever imagine and pray for. Let's hold on to this Christ child with a daring faith.

Let us pray with a fierce trust this Christmas on behalf of those in our neighborhoods, nations and churches: "I will not let You go unless you bless me." (Gen.32:26) ...so that the people can eat and be satisfied (Mark 8:8).

May your Christmas be graciously abundant because of the compassion of Christ at work in your lives.

*Arthur and Annemarie Snijders
Eurasia Region Director*

SIGN: 14 deaf children adopted due to class

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taken sign language courses until they became fluent in the language.

Some of their deaf and hard-of-hearing friends volunteered at this local orphanage where 14 hearing impaired or deaf children lived. Tanya learned that none of the caregivers knew any sign language, and there was no special teacher for these children. This caused problems and miscommunication issues within the orphanage, in particular for the older boys and girls. They did study at a special school, but besides that, there was little communication with their caregivers.

Since Tanya and her husband, Davide, were actively involved in the adoptive parenthood field, Tanya became interested in helping with a trip planned for potential adoptive parents and children from that orphanage to Kazan, Russia. The idea was for the adults and kids to travel together, get to know each other in an informal setting and, possibly, new families would be forged as a result. There were kids with hearing problems in the group, and so Tanya and two other people from Moscow First Church joined the team to help with interpretation and making a video.

"After we got back from the trip and I had a chance to get to know these special children, I thought that if they

get adopted by parents who don't have problems with hearing, this would only solve half of the problems, and there will be miscommunication issues still," she said.

There is a common myth that if one teaches sign language to the child, he or she won't be able to learn spoken Russian. The statistics and facts reveal just the opposite. Nevertheless, because of this myth, parents in Russia (and other CIS Field countries) don't feel it is necessary to learn sign language to communicate with their children, even if that is the standard practice in other countries.

Another myth that deaf/hard-of-

hearing people believe is that they cannot legally adopt children. Which is just that: a myth, not supported by any laws.

So, Tanya developed a dream: "It would be so amazing if deaf parents could adopt children with hearing problems."

She contacted an Internet portal for deaf and hard-of-hearing people called gluxix.net (literally means "there are no deaf people") and they did an interview with Tanya, in which she spoke in sign language about the rights of deaf people, particularly the fact that they can be adoptive parents. They also interviewed five deaf/hard-of-hearing children in sign language.

"The only real help for these children is to place them into families."

-- Tanya Cantarella

Doors open to the deaf

How it began

By Zee Gimon
CIS Field Communications

It all began a few years ago, right before Christmas, when the leaders of the Moscow First Church of the Nazarene were getting ready for an annual community outreach event.

One of the things the church traditionally does is invite people who are not members for the evening. Usually the invitations were done through a social welfare organization. The church prepared gifts for those who were in the at-risk group, such as people with disabilities, low-income families, and people with other needs.

The social welfare service mentioned there was a group of deaf and hard-of-hearing people who were interested in joining the event and even had their own interpreter.

"Can they come?"

"Of course, they can," the Moscow church said.

On the day of the event, 10 people sent by the welfare organization showed up to the gathering and they

MYTHS: Prevented deaf parents from adopting

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This interview was the trigger for the deaf/hard-of-hearing community to begin exploring adoption.

"There was a lot of feedback as well as many questions. Since the questions were similar in nature, I invited everyone who was interested in coming to a meeting to discuss all concerning issues," says Tanya.

The meeting took place December 2015 at the orphanage, and 16 deaf people came. The questions discussed included volunteering at the orphanage and what kind of help is needed.

"Simply going to the orphanage once in a while to bring kids presents and to organize some fun events for them isn't just not helpful, it's actually harmful. The only real help for these children is to place them into families," Tanya said.

As the result of this meeting, some people have volunteered to teach the orphanage caregivers the sign language and the orphanage director has agreed to hire a special teacher for deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

By Russian law, people who want to take in children have to go through a certain training before they can adopt. The orphanage regularly conducts these classes, but they are always geared toward the hearing people.

One of the great results of the December meeting was the organization of the first school for adoptive parents for deaf/hard-of-hearing children, which took place in spring of 2016. In the summer, a couple from the school adopted one of the boys. Another lady, from the Moscow Bible Church, who took the adoptive parents' classes before, adopted a 16-year-old deaf girl from the orphanage, as well. All but two of the other deaf/hard-of-hearing kids were

DOORS: Members studied sign

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loved it. They started coming to Sunday worship services; the sign language interpreter came, too, to help them understand what was being said. They invited their friends, and sometimes there were up to 15 deaf or hard-of-hearing people who joined the morning services.

Going deeper

After a while, several challenges arose. First: the interpreter could no longer help out. The second, a much deeper issue, was that even though the church tried to visualize as much of the service as possible, Tanya realized that to serve these people better as a pastor, she needed to understand what they were saying without an interpreter as a mediator.

So Tanya decided to take sign language classes. After a while, two more young ladies from Moscow First joined the class.

"I fell in love with the sign language," Tanya said. "As I studied it deeper, I dived into the world of deaf/hard-of-hearing people. Before that, I only knew those who came to our services, but these classes have broadened my horizons beyond the church."

Altogether, it took Tanya three 10-week courses and a lot of practice over a two-year period to learn to "speak" the sign language fluently.

taken by hearing families. Of the two children left, one boy is waiting for his birth mother to recover her parental rights, and another girl has turned 18, so she is technically old enough to live on her own.

Such were the results of a year of hard work. Currently, a second group of deaf/hard-of-hearing people is taking the adoptive parents class. Since all the

"As I got to know the deaf culture, their daily lives and struggles, their way of life, I realized that it's not even enough to have a ministry for the deaf people. What these people needed was a ministry of deaf people to other deaf people," says Tanya. "All our efforts in trying to translate everything led to the

understanding that for these people to truly feel a part of the community, to grow strong in faith, they needed to "hear" it from someone who knew what a life of a deaf/hard-of-hearing person was like."

Over time, this group of deaf/hard-of-hearing people, one by one, has disappeared from the church.

The reasons were

different - some moved to another city to live, some simply stopped coming, some died (since there were a lot of older people).

This saddened the church leaders.

"But, Lord, we have spent so much effort and time on preparing ourselves to serve these people, and now they are all gone?" they asked God, wondering what happened, why did it happen, and what could be done.

God, however, was busy at work on something greater: When the door to serving deaf/hard-of-hearing people in the church was closed, another door opened to serve those people outside of the church. (See story page 1) □

"It's not even enough to have a ministry for the deaf people. What these people needed was a ministry of deaf people to other deaf people."

-- Tanya Cantarella

deaf/hard-of-hearing kids were adopted from the orphanage where it all started, right now the team is looking for other orphanages that have children with hearing problems who are available for adoption. □

Mann family joins regional office team

by Gina Grate Pottenger
Eurasia Region Communications



A family of five with 11 passports between them (12, if you count the dog), the Manns are adding an eighth country to their list of nations in which they've served in Nazarene missions in the past 17 years as they relocate to join the Eurasia Regional Office in Büsingen, Germany.

Doug Mann will join the regional finance team in January, while this past October Jennifer took on the role of regional personnel coordinator.

Doug and Jennifer Mann have most recently served in Sofia, Bulgaria, for more than five years. Doug has been working on the district's finances, and also led as district superintendent for four years, and pastored the Sofia First Church of the Nazarene for three years. Previously they served in Peru, Albania, Kosova and Romania.

Doug, who is originally from Washington, D.C. in the U.S., helped to open the new "Balkan Field" (Romania, Bulgaria and Albania) in the late 1990s under former Regional Director Franklin Cook. During a meeting in Gelnhausen, Germany, Doug met Jennifer, who is from the United Kingdom. Jen also had experienced God's call to missions. The two were married in 2003.

When Arthur Snijders, Eurasia Regional Director, this fall invited

the Manns to consider relocating to Büsingen to take on regional roles, they weren't looking for a move.

"It was pretty agonizing for me," Doug said. "So I really felt like we needed some very clear speaking from God."

Jennifer said the couple was reluctant to leave Bulgaria behind.

Through Psalm 46:10, God assured Doug and Jennifer that He had plans for Bulgaria and that He would fulfill them, whether they were there or not:

"10 Let go of your concerns!

Then you will know that I am God.

I rule the nations.

I rule the earth."

"That was obviously very humbling and also very freeing. That was a very, very key component to our decision to say yes," Doug said.

In Büsingen, Doug will join Dan Eaton, who moved to Büsingen with his wife, Melanie, in June to transition into the role of regional finance director. Former finance director Martin Glendenning, along with wife Cezi, and finance assistant Sabine Wielk have relocated to other cities to become involved in local and field ministries.

Doug has a Bachelor's Degree in

Business Management with an emphasis in accounting, and a Master's of Arts Degree in Theology from Point Loma Nazarene University. From the beginning of his missionary service, part of his work has always included district or field accounting.

"We've served in a lot of different places, district, field," Doug said. "We've seen a lot of different issues and so I'd say that those experiences can be really helpful when looking at a finance role."

His regional role will be 60 percent, so the remaining 40 percent of his time is not yet determined. As an ordained elder in the Church of the Nazarene, Doug envisions getting involved in some kind of local church ministry.

As personnel coordinator, Jen will be an administrative resource to missionaries, helping them through contracts and policies, and orienting new missionaries to the field, as well as helping families through the logistics of moving to new locations or returning home at the end of their service.

Jennifer said, "Having lived the life of a missionary for 13 years, hopefully I'll be able to give some perspective to what it is actually like to be on the field" in the role of personnel coordinator.

"I think we both share a desire out of both of our roles to really represent

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Tibis return to Eurasia from Africa Region

by Gina Grate Pottenger
Eurasia Region Communications

In taking on the role of Eurasia Regional Education Coordinator, Stéphane Tibi and his wife, Sandra, are coming full circle.

Originally from France (Stéphane) and Switzerland (Sandra), the couple has served as missionaries in several countries of the Africa Region since 2007. Currently located in Johannesburg, South Africa, Stéphane is the field strategy coordinator for the Africa Central Region.

Stéphane was raised in a committedly atheist family and, a student of robotics, was almost religiously devoted to science until he ran up against the limitations of science that caused him to lose his faith in its infallibility. But God's prevenient grace was at work, first opening Stéphane to His love through the film *The Mission*, which led Stéphane to buy his first Bible and read it.

"Later, when I was finishing a Master of Divinity at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, my wife and I received a phone call from David Hayse who was working at the Global Mission department, asking if we would consider becoming missionaries in Africa with the Church of the Nazarene. Then I realized that God had prepared me to receive this

call more than 10 years earlier through a movie about missions," he said.

Sandra grew up in several Arab speaking countries. She came back to Switzerland, her home country, at age 16. She holds a federal certificate from the Professional School of Business, Fribourg, Switzerland and a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of

***"I felt the lord
convicting me that
I was not praying
enough."***

-- Stéphane Tibi

Fribourg. Raised Catholic, she decided to follow Jesus while she was in college.

In 2007, the couple answered the call, first serving in Uganda, then moving to Reunion Island in 2009.

Stéphane was the field education coordinator for the French Equatorial Field from 2007 to 2009, and the academic dean of Institut Théologique Nazaréen from 2009 to 2013.

"I'm passionate about learning. I love to learn, it's my way to live. It seems

to me that to love, we have to learn: we have to learn to know the other. We are called to learn to love God and love our neighbor. That's the heart of the Christian life. To love means that we will learn to know the other. To learn to know the other, education can play a key part," he said.

Stéphane will be providing leadership and development for Eurasia's institutions of higher learning: European Nazarene College, Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, Eastern Mediterranean Nazarene Bible College and South Asia Nazarene Bible College, which help to prepare hundreds of people across the region for ministry, both in local church settings and through serving society in other vocations.

"To be a pastor is not to have a lot of techniques, it's how to minister God's love to people," Tibi said. "So for me the key thing is not to separate the head and the heart. I will work as much as I can to lead people to united heart and mind experience of God's love and help others to experience God's love. We teach biblical foundations as you teach practical things."

A key part of Stéphane's education ministry is teaching people how to listen

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LISTEN: Learning to hear God key part of education

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to God. In recent years, through dramatic personal experience, he has developed a simple system for teaching people how to practice listening to and hearing God. They have now provided training to people in 15 countries.

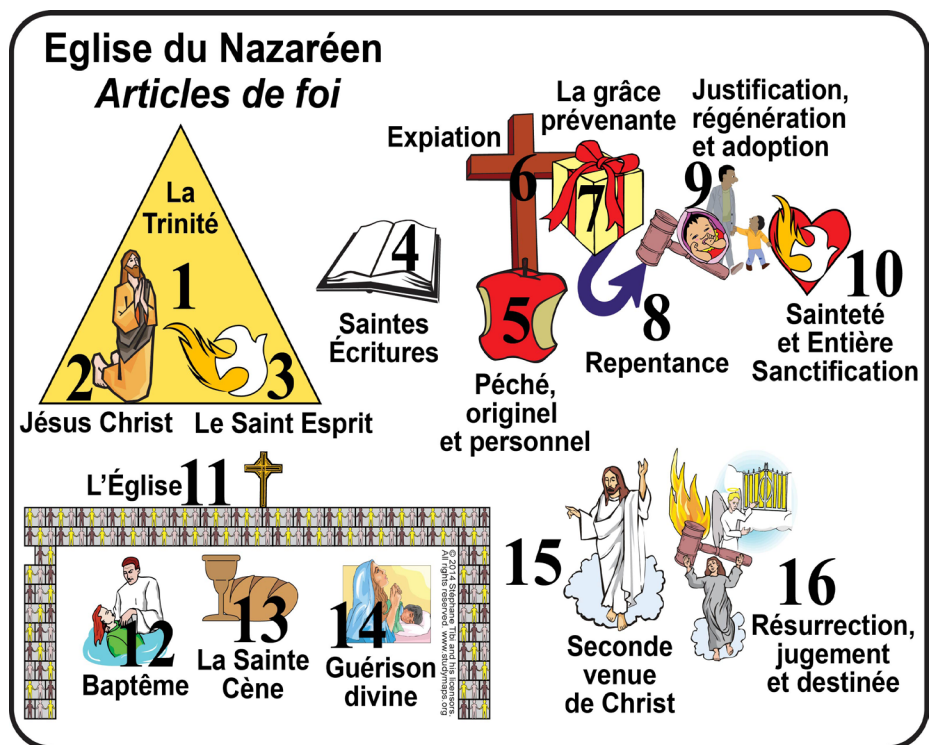
He and Sandra began to seek a deeper prayer life and the ability to better discern God's voice when they experienced intense struggles and failure in their leadership of a local Nazarene church in Reunion, yet he had just been named field strategy coordinator for the Africa Central Field.

"We struggled for years and the church did not grow. I asked, 'What's going on? What's the problem? I'm failing with a small church. If I'm going to fail with 400 churches, I'm in trouble.' Then I felt the lord convicting me that I was not praying enough."

The Lord began waking Stéphane around 2 and 3 a.m. every day and he used that time to pray. He was surprised that he began to have visions, to see miracles, such as enemies reconciled, joy and reconciliation in a troubled district, physical healings and revival. Now, prayer has become the most important part of their spiritual journey and mission work.

In one district where the Tibis led a prayer training, as the leaders practiced listening to God, they felt God was giving them the word "abundance." They began to preach God's abundance across the district, and in one year God led them in planting 18 new churches and the district membership doubled.

For a number of years Stéphane has also been developing StudyMaps – visual ways of studying the Bible and



Stéphane Tibi developed a teaching/learning method reliant on specially sequences of graphics, with or without text, to "map" concepts for more natural learning and memorization. He has developed the Articles of Faith and the books of the Bible, as well as other graphic resources.

the Nazarene church's 16 Articles of Faith, which helps learners internalize the truths more deeply and memorize them more effectively. They grew out of his own struggles to study theology; he began making illustrated graphics to teach himself.

So far the Articles of Faith StudyMap has been translated into dozens of languages. He has also developed the books of the Bible StudyMap in five languages. They are available for download as iPad apps as well.

Stéphane has been working with Scott

Stargel, director of Global Nazarene Publications, to acquire graphics and images that are not copyrighted, to complete his StudyMaps so they can be freely released into the public domain. (To learn more, visit: StudyMaps.org).

The couple plans to move to Büsingen in February 2017. □

Read more of their story at: <http://tiny.cc/btrohy>

Read about how they teach people to listen to God: <http://kingdombearer.blogspot.com/p/listening-to-jesus.html>

MANNS: Bring 'field' perspective

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people at the ground level where things are really happening, and be champions for them," Doug added. "We can both bring something very helpful to the team in terms of experience and exposure. We can speak from experience as to how these (organizational policies) have impacted us."

The couple have three children: Johnny, 10; Sarah, 8; and James, 6. Due to questions surrounding the children's

education, the final moving date has not yet been determined.

"We're waiting for God to do a big miracle with what we're going to be doing in Büsingen [regarding schooling]," Jennifer said. "Our hope and desire is that God meets their educational needs as time goes on. It's a big faith journey. Everything's up in the air. God will work it out." □

"I think we both share a desire out of both of our roles to really represent people at the ground level where things are really happening, and be champions for them."

-- Doug Mann

Ian Wills takes lead for Northern Europe

Rev. Ian Wills became the new field strategy coordinator for Eurasia's Northern Europe Field in August. Originally from Glasgow, Scotland, he is a fourth generation Nazarene. He worked in finance and banking for several years before studying theology, earning a Bachelor of Divinity and a Master of Theology at Glasgow University, and a DMin at Asbury Seminary. He also continues to serve as pastor of Parkhead Church of the Nazarene in Scotland.

What has been your ministry so far?

I've been a Nazarene pastor since 1997. I worked as associate pastor in the Parkhead Church of the Nazarene in Glasgow for 12 years and then as lead pastor in Parkhead for seven years. In-between I had a year's sabbatical when I studied at Asbury Seminary for a doctorate (D.Min.).

My main ministry in my church is helping the church reconnect with the local community, building a strategy for incarnational ministry in one of the poorest areas of Glasgow where our church is located, taking a commuting congregation to become an incarnational, embedded church community. It has been over a period of 20 years that we've really focused on this. We function as a community hub for all kinds of local ministries such as family ministry, addiction ministry, and refugee ministry.

Why did you feel led to take on the role of FSC?

Originally I had no interest in this, I wasn't against it, but not interested. Then I went for a three-day prayer retreat and God spoke to me through 2 Kings 6, where a company of prophets decides to build something new together. I needed to hear that; I basically said to God: If I don't see something in black and white I won't do it, and I felt this passage gave me a black-and-white picture of working with other leaders to sharpen the missional edge of the church.

My big passion is: How do we release local churches into the mission of God? How do we take local congregations to become incarnational ministries? Or in simple terms: How do we get churches to do and say what Jesus did?



What does the new role mean for your current ministry?

Since the FSC role is only part-time, I will remain the pastor at Parkhead Church of the Nazarene. This is possible because in Parkhead I have a team and staff who are very able and gifted in the ministry that they're involved with in the local church. The church board is very supportive of me taking on this new role and think this will be valuable to the wider church.

I have an established church at my feet and the structures are already in place; it's just helping those structures release the local church doing what Jesus does and says.

In this initial stage I'm trying to develop a vision and strategy with local district superintendents (DSs), so this first year I will be working alongside them to create a vision and picture of what the Northern European Field and a strategy coordinator's role could look like.

Where do you see opportunities and

challenges in the Northern Europe Field?

In Northern Europe, the church often feels like exiles; they are strangers in their own society or community and uncertain of how to reconnect with their communities. This is a challenge, but yet there are some churches across the field that have shown that it's possible and are flourishing. But it's not an easy journey.

Many of the challenges in Northern Europe are the same no matter what country you're in, there are lots of similarities, so there is great opportunity for mutual learning. The church has a lot to offer society, and I hope that together we can work on rediscovering and valuing the church (as people both outside and inside the church are often very negative) and capturing an optimistic, hopeful vision of the church.

I'm driven by at least two questions that every church should be asking: Who is our neighbour? What do we have in our hand? This is a way of connecting who we are and what we have with our neighbour. □



Eatons take on finance and member care

by Gina Grate Pottenger
Eurasia Region Communications

Twenty years after Dan and Melanie Eaton first applied with Nazarene Global Mission, they received their first international assignment: to serve the Eurasia Region in finance and member care.

The Eatons, from Nashville, Tennessee, moved in June to Büsingen, Germany, to work at the regional office. Dan is taking over the role of regional finance director from Martin Glendenning. Melanie is the regional secretary, and is also filling the newly created role of regional member care coordinator.

Dan and Melanie Eaton first applied with Nazarene Global Mission in the late 1990s to serve in cross-cultural mission. For various reasons, no match was made and so they focused their careers and ministry in Tennessee.

A former social worker who served in an inpatient unit for adolescent males, most recently Melanie was an academic advisor for graduate students and adult students at Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville.

Dan has a Master's in Business Administration that focused on economic development in urban ministry. Much of his career he has been involved in the nonprofit sector, including affordable housing development, refugee resettlement and serving the homeless.

In Tennessee they started and raised a family and felt fulfilled in the work God gave them.

Then, in February, Global Mission called.

"When I picked up my phone and it said, 'Kansas City,' for whatever reason I said, 'Surely that's not the church wanting me to go to work,'" Dan recalled. "Why didn't I just think it was a telemarketer or prank call? The Lord had kind of prepared me for that."

"We weren't looking for a missionary assignment. But when we got the call... it was something we felt like we had to take seriously," Melanie added.

"I understand my role ... is to get folks what they need so they can do the work. I enjoy working for other people."

-- Dan Eaton

The couple sought God's leading, and talked to their children to see if they were comfortable with their parents moving internationally. Emily Grace is a 26-year-old first grade teacher; John graduated from Northwest Nazarene University this year with a degree in biology. And Mary is a junior at Trevecca Nazarene University, studying journalism.

"We got the green light from them," Melanie said. "Basically they said, 'When can we come see you?' The Lord told us our family's going to be taken care of."

As the first member care coordinator for the Eurasia Region, Melanie is working with Marty Hoskins, leader of Mobilization at the Global Ministry Center, and Cindy Schmelzenbach, the member care coordinator for the Asia-Pacific Region, to develop the role.

"My social work background really affords me a perspective that is healthy, holistic, looking at individual and family development through a strengths-based model," she said. "Often times you see problems may arise in transitions, and that's true for families across the board. In the life of a missionary family or even a single missionary, there are some special challenges added on to those life transitions."

She also looks at how to link people with resources and services they need, and providing education and information.

"I'm the daughter of a CPA, so those details help me with the regional secretary piece," she added.

Dan's finance work over the years has been in different capacities, from the treasurer for a small utility company, to becoming the controller. In the nonprofit housing development, he served as a community and bank liaison. He helped a homeless shelter enhance and build their financial capacity to run their facility.

"I understand my role and that is to get folks what they need so they can do the work," he said. "I'm passionate about that. I enjoy working for other people." □

Lessons learned at refugee conference

By Dorli Gschwandtner
Eurasia Region Communications

What does it mean to “be the church” in the face of migration? What is the church “good at?” When waves of desperate refugees sweep across countries and regions, how does the church go beyond the work of simply “processing” people?

These were questions asked at a November conference, “When Did We See You a Stranger?”, attended by 49 people from 20 countries of Eurasia to learn about how the church can serve refugees.

The value of interconnectedness

The conference was marked by a renewed understanding of interconnectedness and how it contributes to the overall success of refugee ministry across the fields.

“Interconnectedness”, one of four regional priorities, is “the essence of what God wants to do in our region”, according to regional director Arthur Snijders. It allows Nazarenes across the region to minister to people more effectively and with greater confidence, as West Med FSC Bruce McKellips concluded: “Because of the strengths that we each one bring we are better together through interconnectedness to meet the challenges that none of us could confront alone.”

Participants were greatly encouraged by hearing about passionate involvement in other countries and fields, as Central Europe FSC Jay Sunberg summarized aptly: “It’s just encouraging to be part of a church and see the whole operation, this continual process – the efforts happening at the beginning, we are in the middle, what happens at the end – to get the whole picture of it.”

The conference gave new opportunities for forming connections across fields, and East Med FSC Khalil Halaseh highlighted the “strong networking” and “amazing relationships” that were built during this week, along with the teaching that “shaped the vision” and helped participants to “continue with a passion.”

The value of interconnectedness was also demonstrated in very practical ways. Intensive times of prayer for each field made people “feel carried by others”. Participants from Lebanon brought large bags of educational resources in Arabic to be used by NCM staff in Greek refugee camps. And refugees that NCM staff at different points of the journey have grown to love are being connected with Nazarenes in receiving countries, as Dorothy Tarrant emphasized: “This

is one of our biggest concerns ... My hope is to carry that forward and build up a referral network.”

“Being the Church”

One simple but powerful answer was given by Kate Bowen-Evans, a Nazarene with experience in development

work, in her seminar on churches’ refugee responses: Presence. “Simply being in a place can be very valuable,” Bowen-Evans explained. This includes preventing violence and abuse through presence, being a voice for the vulnerable, “abiding with people,” listening to them, offering pastoral care, giving hope, carrying the presence of God into camps and homes. It requires time – and time is a “very significant resource that people in other organisations struggle to offer,” Bowen-Evans pointed out.

Ian Wills, Northern Europe field strategy coordinator, gave a straightforward summary of what it means to “be the church”: “Wherever there are refugees in our cities, towns, there is an opportunity to be demonstrators of God’s love and grace – that’s our simple challenge.”

Find your niche and focus

“Being the church” includes discovering each congregation’s “niche area of expertise” in the refugee

response. Many of the conference speakers stressed the importance of this, which CIS FSC Scott Rainey concluded as an important “takeaway” from the conference: “the need to focus and not try to do too many things; to figure out what we can do well and do it” – and thus avoid the danger of becoming overwhelmed and stopping altogether or “to spread thin and start breaking,” as Bowen-Evans phrased it.

Both General Superintendent Gustavo Crocker and Bowen-Evans encouraged participants to do capacity assessments in this context, make decisions based on assessment results, and be “confident” of their niche. In so doing, congregations resist the temptation of doing things that do not fit them well.

Dorothy Tarrant, who has been engaged in refugee ministry in two camps near Katerini, Greece, since May, concluded that one of their mistakes at the beginning was “that we didn’t define clearly what we’re good at.” Establishing credibility in the camps also helped them to discover which specific area of assistance they would focus on – in this case, the area of education, using materials in Arabic shared at the conference by participants from the Middle East.

Do no harm!

Finding your niche and staying in it also decreases the danger of unintentionally “doing harm.”

“Do No Harm!” is a common

principle in development work, and encourages us not to remain inactive for fear of doing something wrong, but to spend the effort in focusing on what we do well. In refugee ministry, this might mean that we leave certain aspects of relief and rehabilitation work to “those with

training and expertise in certain areas,” Bowen-Evans said. “These are incredibly complex situations, complex political emergencies. You can make mistakes that

“Wherever there are refugees in our cities, towns, there is an opportunity to be demonstrators of God’s love and grace – that’s our simple challenge.”

-- Ian Wills

“These are incredibly complex situations, complex political emergencies. You can make mistakes that really cause people an increase in their vulnerability.”

-- Kate Bowen-Evans

“And the One seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ Then He said, ‘Write this down, for these words are faithful and true.’”
Revelation 21:5 (BSB)

Do you have pictures of your ministry in Eurasia that you would like to share with the region?

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DIGNITY: Church can 'rehumanize'

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really cause people an increase in their vulnerability.”

It is often the assumption that good intentions cover a multitude of sins. However, Crocker pointed out through a common axiom, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”

This also involves trying to do what we can as well as we possibly can. As Crocker said: “Good intentions are not enough because God gave us his best – his Son – so we could experience life abundantly. And he expects us to do the same with our neighbours.”

Dignity: “Am I not human?”

Finally, permeating all services, seminars, workshops and conversations was the awareness that one of the greatest needs in this refugee crisis – and

one that the church has the expertise to meet – is to “re-humanize” refugees at all stages of the journey, treat them with dignity and respect, and also take their capacity into account when planning a response.

“Why am I being treated like this? Am I not human?”

This cry of a desperate young man in a refugee camp – giving voice to the feelings of most refugees en route – was shared by Western Mediterranean FSC Bruce McKellips in one of the prayer times, and highlighted the place where the church, simply by “being the church” and focusing on what it does best – giving time, being present, building relationships – can make a big difference. □

Prayer Requests

- Please pray for Moscow First Church of the Nazarene and its ministry in the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, particularly in helping connect adoptive parents with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Ask God to continue opening doors to the church's love and service to this precious community.
- Please pray for Ian Wills as he steps into leadership for Northern Europe. Ask God to give him the creativity, wisdom and discernment to help the church in Europe advance through a revival of the anointing of God.
- Pray for Doug and Jennifer Mann as they finalize logistics to move their family to Germany and serve in regional roles. Ask God to open the right doors for educational opportunities for their 3 children, and help all make the transition smoothly to new culture and language.
- Ask God to be with Stéphane and Sandra Tibi as they return to Eurasia and Stéphane begins leading regional education. Pray for God to guide their move, and provide all they need to live in a new country and take on new ministry.
- Pray for Dan and Melanie Eaton as they lead in finance and member care. Pray for their continued transition to a new culture and language, and for God to provide them all they need in their work.

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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