

WHERE WORLDS MEET

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CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
EURASIA

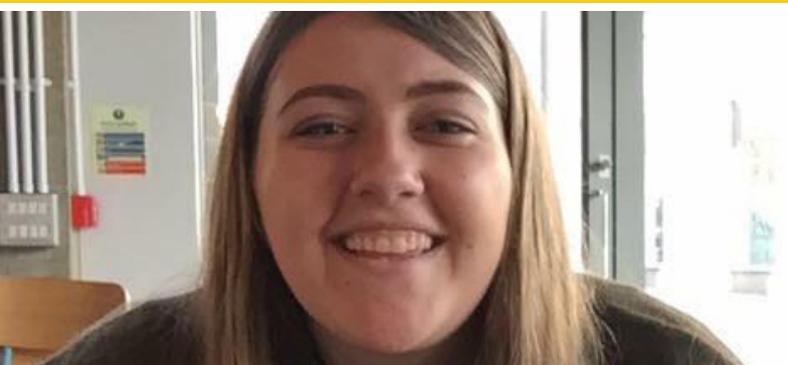
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Ukrainian church planted in Spain

As Ukrainians relocate to Spain to escape armed conflict in the east, some have come together to form a new congregation.

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A mentoring story

Mentors in a local church helped Amy Warner recognize God's call to ministry.

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"Today you are a new creation"

A young woman in India was crippled with regret for the past -- until Christ gave her a new future.

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Youth testimony

A mentoring story

By Ted Voigt

Meet Amy Warner. Amy is the youth pastor at Erskine Church of the Nazarene, and the District Nazarene Youth International (NYI) president for the British Isles North District. If you've ever wondered whether your investment in a young person is worth it, keep reading.

Amy grew up in the Erskine Church, but as a teenager she felt like there weren't too many other girls in the church, and it would have been easy to wander away. In a church with few female leaders, it would have been understandable for then youth pastor Alan Baird to feel like maybe there wasn't much he could do.

"There really weren't female mentors in the church," says Amy, "and that probably would have been a block for a lot of girls who might have been interested in serving, without female leaders to show them how to lead as a female."

With her pastor's encouragement, when Amy was just 17 she began her ministry career as a youth intern at her church.

"(Alan) taught me everything he knew," she says.

She wasn't interested in a ministry career at first, but that relationship stayed with her.

"As I left school and thought about what I wanted to do in my life, I

realised the investment he had in me, and everything he helped me to understand. I wanted to do that for people."

Amy wanted to be a mentor for her friends and others because she knew firsthand the value of having an older person who cared for her beyond her family.

Amy realised her call into leadership didn't come in isolation; the church had to accept and encourage her while she searched for her calling.

"If I hadn't been a part of this local church, I wouldn't have entered ministry, and I don't even know if I would still be a Christian. Alan and Pastor Derrick really believed in me and helped me to figure out my place in the story of God. From there, the church were really willing to be creative in thinking about what my role could look like."

Becoming the youth pastor at Erskine Church means she is also stepping into the church's role in the community. In the local secondary school, she is continuing work which was started by Baird, and she has seen that partnership flourish.

"Alan's work (in the high school) for all those years has made it possible for me to go in to the school and speak in classrooms about Jesus."

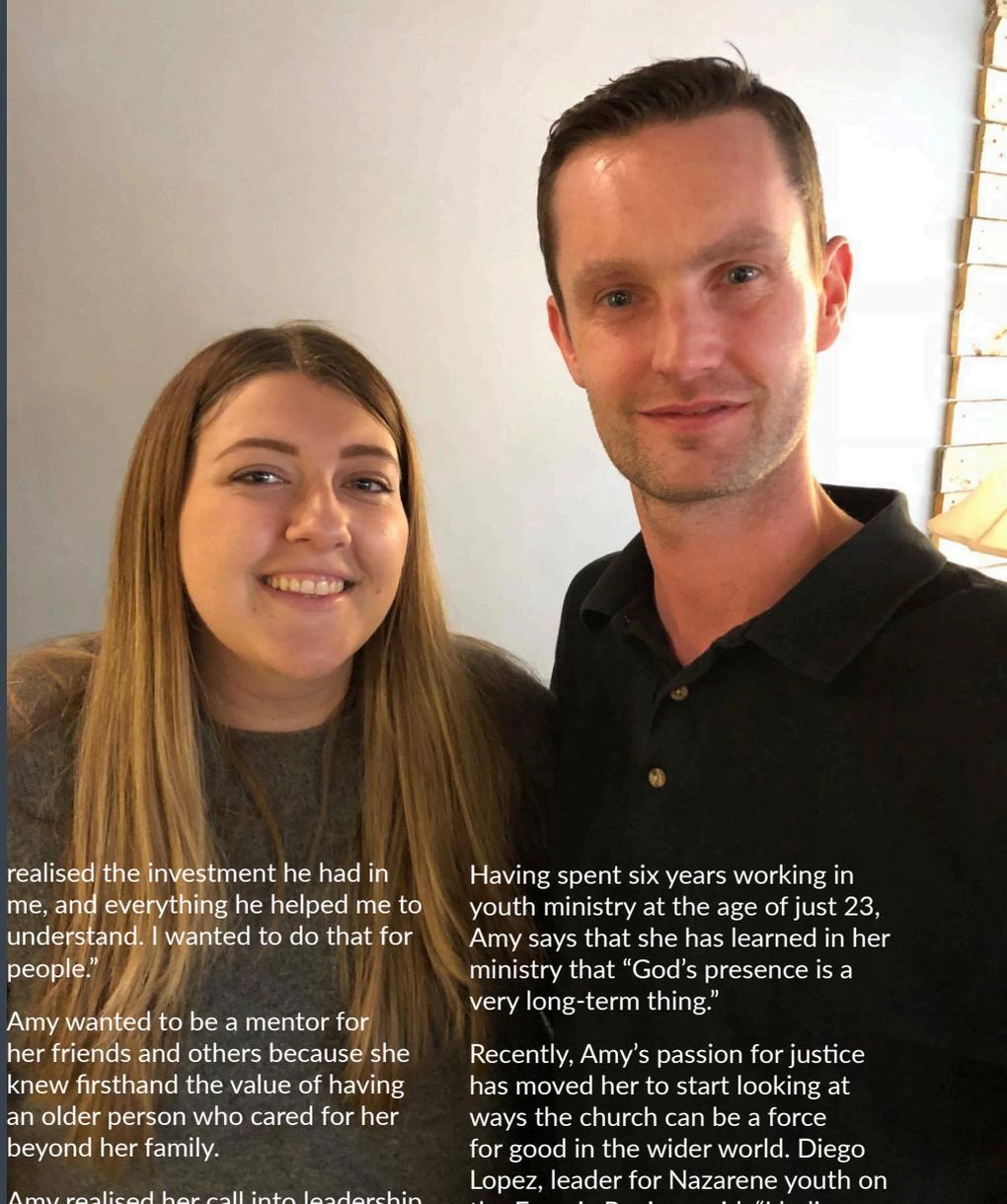
Having spent six years working in youth ministry at the age of just 23, Amy says that she has learned in her ministry that "God's presence is a very long-term thing."

Recently, Amy's passion for justice has moved her to start looking at ways the church can be a force for good in the wider world. Diego Lopez, leader for Nazarene youth on the Eurasia Region, said, "I believe that Amy has a compelling passion for social justice. (She) has been able to inspire many in NYI (Nazarene Youth International) and in the wider church... to think deeper about our actions, and how we contribute into a more fair world."

Amy is living that out through her work on her district, as well as her work for justthreads.org. Just Threads is a clothing company with a three-fold approach to their support of social justice efforts: selling only fair trade products; using design to promote awareness; and sharing the profits with existing charities.

"I want to connect people to use their gifts for justice," she says.

Amy is an example of how God uses the passions of God's people to build the kingdom on earth, and a reminder that our investment in young people is essential mortar in the building process. □





Local church

Ukrainian church planted in Spain

By Nicole Almeida

Through a series of unlikely – but God-ordained – events, a Ukrainian Nazarene congregation was recently organized in Murcia, Spain, and is uniquely positioned to reach other Ukrainian refugees who are moving to the area.

In the south of Spain, Murcia has become a city of refuge for those who need to start a new life or find help outside of their native country, especially people displaced from eastern Ukraine by the ongoing armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

One of these was Pastor Yuriy, a Ukrainian pastor who relocated to Spain five years ago with his family when he became very ill, and could not get the medication he needed in Ukraine.

Years before, Yuriy had found Christ under the ministry of Nazarene Pastor Roman, when Yuriy was still addicted to drugs. Having found freedom from addiction

through Christ, Yuriy wanted to minister to others who were still in bondage to addiction, and embarked on his own pastoral ministry.

“For about 10 years he wanted to help [those who were] in the same place he once was before,” said Pastor Roman. After the move to Murcia, “little by little a group of Russian speakers that had moved to Spain were captivated by Pastor Yuriy’s way of teaching.”

Because this group was not affiliated with any denomination, Pastor Roman talked with Pastor Yuriy about the Church of the Nazarene’s teaching and doctrine.

After the group agreed that they wanted to be part of the denomination, Nazarene leaders in Spain, Ukraine and Portugal talked and agreed to work together to help establish this new Ukrainian congregation in Spain. Since then, the small church in Murcia has been part of the Spain District.

“As a district, we have the mission to plant churches,” said Ignacio Pesado, superintendent of the Spain District. “We visited [the Ukrainian group] and, from the first moment, we knew that they would be part of the Church of the

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UKRAINE: Spain, Ukraine partnered to support new church

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Nazarene in Spain.”

The Spain District is now a mix of Spanish-speaking members and members from Ukraine and Russia.

One of the challenges this district faces is communication. Although both Pastor Yuriy and Pesado communicate through translation, it is not easy.

Pesado said, “With the will we have to serve and to join strengths, we see that the church can help a lot of the refugees.”

In August 2017, Ukraine sent a volunteer missionary, Sergiy Dzyba, through the Eurasia Region’s M+Power initiative to help Nazarenes serve in other parts of Eurasia as cross-cultural volunteers. Dzyba had received a call from Scott Rainey, the leader of the CIS Field, of which Ukraine is a part. Rainey told Dzyba about the Ukrainian church in Spain and its desire for more support.

“He told me I was the perfect choice, because I speak English, Russian-Ukrainian and I’m learning Spanish. At the moment, I do not know why I started learning Spanish, it was just a language that I liked. I had no interest in going to Spain one day,” said Dzyba.

After working with youth and as a pastor for many years, Dzyba felt God’s call to go help in Spain for almost four months. One of his tasks was to help with the integration of the church into the district life.

“He helped the church understand better the Church of the Nazarene, since many came from different backgrounds, and this helped them feel part of something more,” said Pesado. “He helped us with the language barrier.”

While working with the church, Dzyba helped Pastor Yuriy and his

family with the congregation. “It’s a small church, about 40 people, but it’s a good church,” said Dzyba. “They started five years ago and are now an organized church.”

At the organization service, Pesado was the main speaker.

“We also had guests from other churches that are close to us in Murcia. The Nazarene churches in Spain are far from us, so other pastors could not come,” said Dzyba.

Pastor Yuriy wants to start a rehabilitation centre in Murcia.

“He is planning on starting a ministry with people with addiction problems, because there are many people from Ukraine and Russia suffering with this problem,” said Dzyba.

Everybody in the congregation has experienced suffering, he said.

“I have learned from them. Most of them have gone through so much. They go through economic problems or live without their family and I have seen how blessed I am.”

Even though the church is still limited with the Spanish language, they are working to integrate with the district.

Dzyba says, “They have a very strong congregation with a good heart, committed and faithful to the Lord. If they listen to God’s plans for them, I think they will have a great future.” □

“We see that the church can help a lot of the refugees.”

**-- Ignacio Pesado,
Spain District
Superintendent**

“Even though we have the language barrier, every time my family and I visit Pastor Yuriy and his family, we feel at home and our friendship is growing,” said Pesado.

Instead of turning the church into a Spanish church, Pesado saw that there was a need to retain the congregation’s original identity. Pesado found that the Spanish government has an official agreement with Ukraine to receive refugees displaced by the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, and help them start over in Spain. Most of these people have lost family and friends. Therefore, the church in Murcia is uniquely able to reach other Ukrainian refugees in their own language.

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Testimony

'Today you are a new creation' *A redemption story*

By Rev. Kiran Thomas

MADYA PRADESH, INDIA
-- After completing her bachelor's degree and martial arts training in 2015, Ranjita began to give martial arts classes for the girls in nearby hostels and schools. Life was much settled in routines -- until one day something happened that shook her whole life, and brought her to a point where she lost herself in depression.

Ranjita is a beautiful, 22-year-old young woman from Bihar, Madya Pradesh. She lives in a small town with her parents and four siblings, and their needs are somehow met by the small shop run by her father. Her family comes from an unbelieving background, but is now growing in Christ.

It was a bright day and her happiness had

no limits when her best friend Sonu, whom she knew for years, visited her for a few days.

"I was very happy to have her with me. But my happiness did not last for long," Ranjita said. "That next day when I was to go for teaching the martial art class in the nearby village, I invited Sonu to accompany me. I was very much excited to have her with me. She, too, was very happy."

It was some half an hour journey from Ranjita's village. On the way, they had to cross a small mud bridge over a dry riverbed, with large, exposed sharp rocks. As usual Ranjita took her scooter, but Sonu insisted to drive. They were enjoying the ride, chatting and giggling together when, suddenly, on the mud bridge their scooter lost balance. They both were thrown over the bridge onto the sharp rocks.

Ranjita uttered a prayer to God, saying "Lord, please help us." She was scared and shivering with fear. Her face was covered with blood and she was in deep pain. Her fear was greatest because she could not see her friend. She began calling Sonu's name, but there was no response.

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PAST: Terrible accident took the life of her friend

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She heard a small groaning sound. To her distress she saw Sonu had fallen in the deeper side. Ranjita could not reach out to help her, limited by her own pain and dizziness. She tried to call her family but could not get connected.

returned home within one month.

Though Ranjita felt broken, guilty and lonely, God was close to her. Things in Ranjita's life changed when she got an opportunity to attend a three-day convention through her church. Ranjita had both emotional and spiritual needs; she sought freedom and peace.

"I was totally broken and felt very lonely," she said, her eyes watering with emotion. "I needed peace in my heart, so I went to the convention expecting Jesus to heal my heart and give me peace. To my utter surprise, in midst

of thousands of people attending the meeting, one pastor lady from the convention leading team came straight to me, placed her hand on my head and prayed for me. And I felt so much blessed as I cried out my heart to the Lord. I prayed to my Lord ... Please God I need a comforting and caring hug from you, please help me."

God answered Rajita's prayer as the pastor began talking with her. Ranjita cried as she shared her entire burden with the pastor.

Ranjita's expression changed to joy and excitement when she said, "On hearing my story the pastor lady suddenly hugged me lovingly; I felt Jesus hugging me. The pastor lady said to me, 'Don't cry, Jesus loves you. Forget whatever has happened in your past and trust in Jesus, for He is with you.' She said, 'Today you are a new creation and He will bless you.'"

Ranjita says that she will never forget those loving words and hug that changed her life. The guilt was washed away and God's peace entered her heart.

"I believe that Jesus spoke to me through her."



After the convention, Ranjita returned home with joy and hope.

Ranjita was a changed person, and her pastor noticed. After observing her a few months, Ranjita's pastor asked if she was willing to go for Bible school training. Ranjita was happy but did not respond immediately, taking time to pray about the matter. Later she was surprised when her church director gave her the same advice. The director was willing to financially support her Bible school training. Ranjita took this as an answer to her prayer and confirmation of God's call for ministry.

Ranjita is blessed to be in South India Bible School and is a living testimony of God's grace, which restored her life and filled it with new joy and hope in Christ. □

"The pastor lady said to me, 'Don't cry, Jesus loves you. Forget whatever happened in your past and trust in Jesus, for He is with you. Today you are a new creation.'"

-- Ranjita

Ranjita somehow gathered her strength and climbed up to the nearby road. She cried for help to the passing vehicles, but many passed her by. Eventually one passerby came to her rescue. She felt as if God had come down to help her. She remembers telling him about Sonu before she fell unconscious.

"It took me six months to recover from my physical injuries, but to my shock my friend passed away after two months," Ranjita said. "I was totally broken. I felt guilty, that Sonu died because of me." She believed that if she had not taken her to the class, this incident would have not happened.

Ranjita was devastated.

Villages in India, being close communities, are socially bound to each other's family. Ranjita was more and more depressed due to the constant reminder of her friend's death, as neighbors and relatives repeatedly discussed the accident, increasing her guilt. She could not avoid her neighbors asking her about the tragedy. So the family decided to send her to a nearby town for work. But Ranjita could not adjust there on her own and

Who are Nazarenes?

We are a Christian people

As members of the Church Universal, we join with all true believers in proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in affirming the historic Trinitarian creeds and beliefs of the Christian faith. We value our Wesleyan-Holiness heritage and believe it to be a way of understanding the faith that is true to Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience.

We are a holiness people

God, who is holy, calls us to a life of holiness. We believe that the Holy Spirit seeks to do in us a second work of grace, called by various terms including "entire sanctification" and "baptism with the Holy Spirit"-cleansing us from all sin, renewing us in the image of God, empowering us to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, and producing in us the character of Christ. Holiness in the life of believers is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.

We are a missional people

We are a sent people, responding to the call of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to go into all the world, witnessing to the Lordship of Christ and participating with God in the building of the Church and the extension of His kingdom (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1). Our mission (a) begins in worship, (b) ministers to the world in evangelism and compassion, (c) encourages believers toward Christian maturity through discipleship, and (d) prepares women and men for Christian service through Christian higher education.

Learn more at: www.nazarene.org/articles-faith

"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'"

-- Mark 16:15

Prayer requests

Pray for Amy Warner and the many other young adults whom God is gifting and calling into various forms of ministry. Pray they will experience deep personal and spiritual growth and effectiveness in their ministry. Pray also for local churches and mature leaders to continue investing in children, youth and young adults as they develop into mature Christians.

Please pray for the new Nazarene church in Murcia, Spain, as they continue ministering to other Russian-speaking residents and refugees in Spain. Ask God to develop the congregation into a mature, missional and loving church that shares the love of Christ in their community.

Pray for Ranjita, as she studies theology and testifies to others about the healing and renewal available to everyone through the power and love of Jesus Christ.

Where Worlds Meet

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