

# WHERE WORLDS MEET

MARCH 2018 / ISSUE 3



CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE  
EURASIA

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Church multiplication

# Bangladesh church creates two new districts

By Gina Grate Pottenger



*The roughly 500 people attending the Bangladesh North District Assembly were asked to move to different parts of the building, depending on what village they were from. There was gentle confusion as people tried to sort out which area they needed to move to.*

The scene unfolded 30 January, just after the North District received official approval from the denomination's Board of General Superintendents to create two new districts due to rapid church growth over the past eight years. Those in attendance were asked to move to the space where their new district was gathered.

"There was a sense of excitement as people voted for the approval of the districts being divided," said Annemarie Snijders, mobilization coordinator for the Eurasia Region. "This felt like a special recognition of what God was doing in Bangladesh."

Since 2010, the Bangladesh Church of the Nazarene has multiplied from one national district to five.

In the last eight years, the North District had grown beyond the ability of one superintendent to effectively support all the congregations, said Milon P. \*, national coordinator for JESUS Film and child development ministries.

"A second reason was because creating three districts from one will allow the mother district, as well as the new districts, to expand to new areas where there is not a church yet," added Trino Jara, field strategy coordinator for the church in South Asia.

Congratulating the district for its missional vision, General Superintendent Dr. Eugenio Duarte announced the approval.

"You will not be weaker, you will be stronger," Duarte said to the assembly. "Those two new districts will belong to the same church, and all three districts will in some ways do some things together."

Rev. Anjon Moses B. \* formerly the superintendent (DS)

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# BANGLADESH: Strong in evangelism and church planting

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for the North District, has been appointed DS for Rangpur District, and Rev. Puren R.\* appointed for Thakurgaon District.

“My aim as DS is to strengthen our churches, care for the leadership for the future church and preach the gospel in the area,” Puren said.

“God called me to serve His Kingdom as DS and I am happy for that,” Anjon said. “My father was a pastor and I am also serving as a pastor for many years. I will serve wherever I am called.”

Both districts are being started as “phase II” which means they will receive some financial support, with a planned decrease in amount until the district is fully self-sustaining in three years, said Jara.

Started in 1993, the Church of the Nazarene Bangladesh has rapidly expanded by following the holistic ministry model of Jesus Christ – sharing His love with people by meeting their physical, emotional and spiritual needs together.

From the beginning, compassionate ministries and JESUS Film evangelism and discipleship have been core elements of demonstrating God’s love for

people. Congregations not only taught people about God from the Bible and formed local worshipping communities, they also participated in disaster relief efforts; established food security projects; organized women into empowering self-help groups in which they pooled funds to start small businesses; set up child-focused community development centers; and much more.

Over the years, dozens of JESUS Film teams showed the gospel in the Bangladeshi language to hundreds of thousands of people and established discipleship groups, many of which have become organized churches that are now engaged in mission to their communities and nation.

“Life in Bangladesh is tough,” said Eurasia Regional Director Arthur Snijders, reflecting on his impressions during his first visit to the country six years ago. “They were so grateful that they had heard the gospel, and they were living now for Jesus. I came away from that time very much aware that Christ brings hope in very dire circumstances and He also brings gratitude and joy in places where I never expected them.”

Leaders of the church in Bangladesh

have a vision to plant a church in every village in the country, which boasts a population of nearly 163 million.

**“Christ brings hope in very dire circumstances and He also brings gratitude and joy in places where I never expected them.”**

**-- Arthur Snijders,  
Eurasia Regional Director**

“The districts are strong in evangelism and church planting,” said Milon P. “At the same time we need that theological depth and pastors’ training. There is a lot of challenge because of the socioeconomic background of the people. They’re behind other Bangladeshi people in terms of literacy, economic development and social development because most of the churches in that [area] are indigenous groups of people.”

To meet this challenge, the church must strengthen and expand its theological education, Snijders said.

“Having all these new churches and Nazarenes calls for discipleship and good pastoring, and good teaching. That is a challenge that has been with Bangladesh for quite some time. With the multiplication, the need for education and equipment also multiplies.

“I don’t think we have solved it yet, but my prayer would be that the Lord would not only call pastors, but that there would be a place where there would be more qualified teachers in Bangladesh, and we would have more schools and learning centers to serve the church.”

□

\*Full names omitted for security reasons.



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Local church

## Glasgow's only Nazarene pub

By Ted Voigt

*On Glasgow's east side, wedged between an Indian take-out and a tiny convenience store, is a row of shuttered windows. Above are the words: "THE CHARTER," with a "For Sale" sign that cuts off the word "BAR." The paint is shabby, the walls have been tagged with graffiti more than once, and half a mile away, Parkhead Church of the Nazarene are the new owners.*

Under the leadership of Pastor Ian Wills, the Parkhead church have made it their objective to continually invest in their community. And with this new property, they hope to breathe a new spirit into an area of their city very much in need.

The bar, which was shut down in 2014, had a reputation for attracting a rough crowd. Now, as the church move in to renovate, they are hoping to offer positive

opportunities in a place where real community can form.

The process began back in 2016, says Pastor John Craig, part of the team working to repurpose the bar. As the congregation grew to the limits of their current space, they began to consider church planting. So, when the old bar was put up for sale, the timing seemed right.

The Charter Bar "ticked a couple of boxes," says Craig. "Firstly, it is local enough to be another space that some groups at Parkhead Nazarene church could use." And, in addition to helping ease space constraints, the bar is far enough from Parkhead church to "make it seem like the kind of place where we can explore missional opportunities to that particular location."

The church did not have the funds to buy the property, but they secured a loan and moved forward on faith that this new outpost in their community would be supported. They've held fundraisers at Parkhead, as well as sought grants and even created an online giving page through the fundraising site Virgin Money Giving.

see "GLASGOW" • page 6

# GLASGOW: New space presents opportunities to partner

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Acquiring the new building, which they hope to open this summer, has not been entirely seamless. It took some effort for them to even discover who exactly was selling the building. And then there was the city planning department. Projects like this don't fit into the traditional boxes for a city – it's not a cafe,

The Nazarene church in Parkhead also places a high value on partnerships, and their new endeavour is no different.

Craig says, "The Charter sits almost exactly equidistant between Parkhead Nazarene and another evangelical church, namely Easterhill Community Church, with whom there are both historic and current links and overlaps in friendship and ministry."

The Easterhill congregation is excited for the opportunity to make use of the new community-centred space that the Parkhead church is pioneering.

As for a new name to put on the building, they haven't settled on anything yet. "The Charter' (which means "Royal Decree") seems to be the default that is stuck in people's minds," says Craig, although he points out that discussions about renaming the building are ongoing.

□



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it's not a bar, but it's not exactly a "church" either. Eventually they were able to make the case that their use of the building would be classed as a "place of worship."



# Bringing the Gospel to forbidden lands

By Nicole Almeida

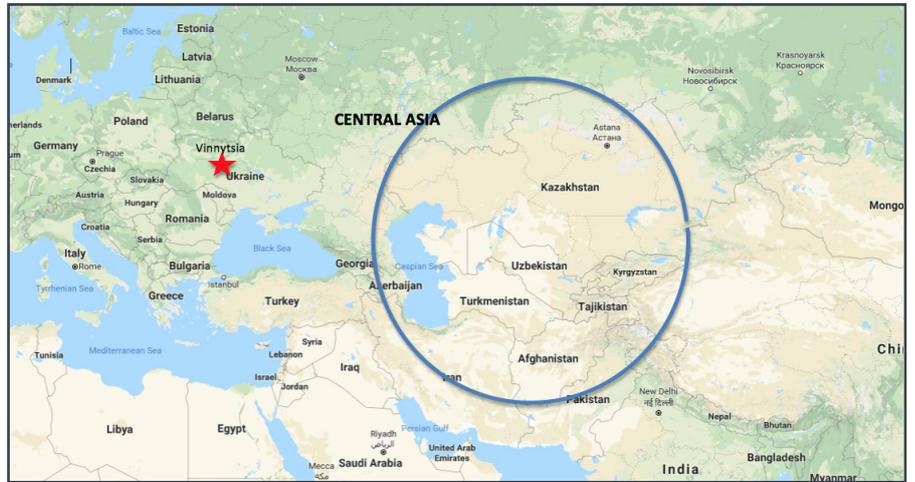
*“Going where the church is not yet” – that is what one Ukrainian Nazarene pastor has done over the past four years, as he has joined an evangelical missional association to minister in a remote mountain village where the people had never heard of Jesus.*

The isolated people live in a mountainous region that reaches an elevation of 7,649 meters (25,095 feet) as it winds through China, Afghanistan and several Central Asian nations. Tucked in these mountains, the association found a small group living high above sea level, in a climate that does not allow trees to grow.

“The mountains are really high and have a harsh climate. There is a 50 percent deficiency of oxygen and, because of its climate, it is hard to get there,” said the pastor of the Vinnitsya Church of the Nazarene, in central Ukraine. “They have a challenging economic and political situation. [They] have no medical care and have never had electricity. Their usual meal is tea and bread, so when we came and offered candy they were all very happy. We want to bring the word of God to them and show His love for them.”

For eight months a year, the village is covered in snow, making travel there dangerous. The mission team can only access the village from May to September, on a 3-meter-wide road with no protection. Cars must be careful to not fall off the cliff.

“There is no plane or train to go up



the mountain. Every time we travel, we pray for our driver and those also driving.”

During their repeated visits, the team has seen how this ethnic group has been long isolated from the world. The residents live in humble homes.

“The scariest thing is that, over the history of Christianity, they have never heard of the gospel,” the pastor said.

The ecumenical team was sent to this previously unreached village, as well as other areas where the gospel had not yet reached, by the Association of the Missionary Churches of Ukraine.

“This association includes different churches that belong to different denominations and they are united by the idea of preaching the gospel to countries that have not yet been reached by it. It is not about the countries that have a few churches or few Christians, but about the countries or ethnic groups that have not heard of the gospel [at all],” the pastor said.

After seeing the people’s physical and economic struggles, the association decided to respond to

the needs they expressed.

“Our main mission is to help poor and disadvantaged people and kids,” the pastor said. “The most unprotected layer of society is children, therefore, we buy food and clothes [for them]. Through this social help we’ve begun to work with the families as well.”

*“It is a blessing to have pastors in the CIS who have a heart for missions and reaching the unreached people of the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”*

*-- Scott Rainey  
CIS Field Strategy Coordinator*

The mission group has gained trust with local administrators of the small community after providing 200 desks and 400 chairs for schools and orphanages in the past year.

“This way we have been able to create relationships with directors and teacher of the schools. They have opened the doors to their homes for us to come. The ethnic group has opened their homes. They allow us to share meals with them at their table. They are open to hear the gospel and they now allow us to pray for their lives. They are

see **“UNREACHED”** • page 8

# UNREACHED: Church is part of 'God's big mission'

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experiencing God's love."

After working four years with this ministry, the pastor from the Church of the Nazarene in Vinnytsya has seen God working not only in the ethnic group in the mountains, but also in the local congregation that has sent him.

"God has encouraged the people at our church, because they realized that they are part of something much bigger: They are part of God's big mission. Being Christian is not just about having a good life, but there is so much more. The church has realized the impact they can have on others' lives."

He said that some members of his congregation have also responded to the call of God by joining teams going to minister to the people.

Scott Rainey, who leads the churches in the CIS Field (former Soviet Union countries), said the Vinnytsia church's missional heart is shared by Nazarenes across the field. That is why they are making a concerted effort to plant new churches and open work in countries where the Church of the Nazarene was not previously present.

"It is a blessing to have pastors in the CIS, like our Vinnytsia, Ukraine, pastor, who have a heart for missions and reaching the unreached

people of the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Rainey said. "I am convinced that the future of missions in the CIS, especially to the Central Asia countries, is not through Western missionaries, but through our own CIS Nazarenes. The shared history of the Soviet Union and the shared language of Russian open natural doors for the Gospel that are not afforded to all.

"I am also thankful to JESUS Film Harvest Partners ([jfhp.org](http://jfhp.org)) for donating 15 Papyrus [audio Bibles] for this outreach," Rainey went on. "Each Papyrus is capable of sharing an audio version of the Scriptures in the people's heart language, to up to 200 people!" □

In memoriam

## Sri Lanka church leader passes away



Mrs. Vathani, spouse and ministry partner of Rev. Daniel, superintendent of the Sri Lanka District, passed away 6 March following a brave battle against illness.

Hermann Gschwandtner, former field strategy coordinator for South Asia, of which Sri Lanka is a part, penned the following words about Vathani:

"With great sadness we have heard about the recent passing of our sister Vathani.... Since the beginning of the work in Sri Lanka in the fall of 1999, Rev. Daniel and his wife have served the church. They started the first JESUS Film team in the country and organized the first Church of the Nazarene.

"For many years they did not just house the church in Hali-Ela, but also started dozens of churches and housed regular training sessions for new pastors via South Asia Nazarene Bible College (SANBC). Sister Vathani was herself a graduate of SANBC."

Vathani also leaves behind four sons: Oshan, Anushan, Dishan and Joy Krishan.

Please pray not only for Vathani's family as they grieve the loss of wife and mother, but for the church in Sri Lanka, as they honor her dedication and passion for the gospel by carrying on her legacy. □



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# Easter

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APRIL 1, 2018

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# 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](http://www.nazarene.org/articles-faith)

*"I will answer them before they even call to me.  
While they are still talking about their needs,  
I will go ahead and answer their prayers!"*

-- Isaiah 65:24

## Prayer requests

Please pray for the new Nazarene districts in Bangladesh, that God will bless and expand their missional vision, open doors to new communities, and anoint the believers and leaders in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for the family of Mrs. Vathani, spouse and ministry partner of Rev. Daniel, the superintendent of the church in Sri Lanka. Vathani passed away at the beginning of March. Ask God to give a special measure of his comforting presence and sustaining grace to her family, including her four sons, and their friends and the church across Sri Lanka.

Pray for the Glasgow church as they reach new people with a new space, that God will bless their love for their community by transforming many lives.

Pray for the Nazarenes in Ukraine as they engage in God's mission to unreached people groups in Central Asia. Pray for fruit in their work and more doors to open.

## Where Worlds Meet

is the monthly newsletter for the Eurasia Region of the Church of the Nazarene.

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