

WHERE WORLDS MEET

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Church planting

A new work is brewing

Church planting efforts revive in Scotland

By Gina Grate Pottenger

It was his first ever birthday party.

The young man, who is in his late 20s, had never been given a birthday party until the team at Blend, a new Nazarene coffee shop, became his family.

He had also never had a job. The young man dropped out of university to be the full-time caregiver for his terminally ill parents until they each passed away within the space of a year.

Despite his struggles with social anxiety and depression, the young man joined the staff at Blend.

"I see it not only as a vibrant part of the district's life now, but a sign of hope for our future."

***-- Jim Ritchie, superintendent,
British Isles North District***

general, but six months in he's so much more confident. He has a beautiful sense of humor. He's trying to connect with customers.... He's

got a whole new family who joined him at his father's funeral. He's joining the church family with the little faith he still has."

The coffee shop is one of three across Scotland where Nazarenes are creating space to love people and explore what it means to have faith in God.

Nazarene-led coffee shop launches church plant

In October 2018, Blend launched in downtown Dundee, Scotland's fourth largest city, named Scotland's Best Place to Live in 2019 by the Sunday Times. It is also home to the brand new Victoria and Albert Museum of Design, the only V&A museum outside of London.

The museum's opening in September spurred billions of pounds of investment in the area and a rapid revitalization.

"Dundee is on the rise," Thames said. "We just got in by God's grace."

Thames was able to obtain a historic storefront in the city center, on Reform Street, between the largest printing firm in Europe and the McManus Art Gallery. The prime location allows staff to engage in ongoing conversations with regular customers.

Relationships with customers, and among the team, is one of Blend's driving values, Thames said. The baristas are encouraged to step from behind the bar and spend time with customers over coffee, getting to know them and listening -- another core value -- to their stories.

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BLEND: Shop creates space for relationships

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"Most cafes in the city are small and cramped—especially the ones that serve good coffee and food. It is hard to find a place that you feel comfortable staying for a while without feeling like you are just taking up space," said Tori Stone, who is on the church planting team, and works in Blend several days a week. "We have the space that welcomes people to stay for awhile. Students often come in and study for hours at a time. Business people come in and have meetings there. We have had different people and organisations use the space for events. I have even seen a few people taking naps on our sofas. We want to create an environment that people feel comfortable staying in as long as they need to, and I think we are doing that, so far."

Coffee with a mission

Thames was pastoring a Church of the Nazarene in Erskine when he began dreaming of a creative solution to a local problem: there were no Nazarene churches north of the city of Perth, and there had not been a successful church plant in Scotland in the past 20 years.

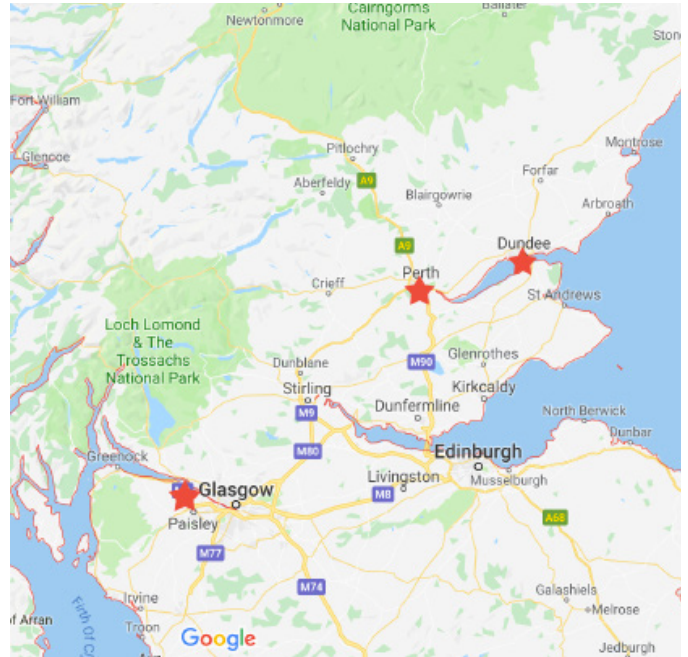
During their time as baristas in college at Point Loma Nazarene University, Thames and his wife, Dayna, developed a "deep sense" that coffee shops are an ideal place to connect with people who yearn for community but probably would not visit a church.

"One of the things we want to do in planting a new church [is to] reach new people -- people who have never heard the gospel, and people who have nothing to do with church," Thames said.

Years later, after being part of a Nazarene church-planting team in Kosovo and serving several churches in Scotland, Derrick and Dayna still believed a coffee shop could open doors to loving unchurched people and drawing them into a transformative faith community.



In 2012, Thames (second from right) and three friends – (from left) Sundeep Salins, Gregor Banks and Alan Baird – pooled their funds to rent space in Perth. Salins quit his job as a council architect to help open and manage the first Blend coffee shop. In 2016, the second Blend location opened in Paisley, a neighborhood of Glasgow.



A 'Blend' of models

Each Blend location operates on a slightly different model of ministry, but all are connected to the Nazarene church in Scotland and operate on the same five values: **B**lessing people; **L**istening to God and people as a critical ingredient for relationships; **E**ating together as a reflection of the table that Christ invites everyone to join as part of the Kingdom; **N**urturing a love for God and others; **D**aring to step out in faith, out of one's comfort zone.

When the Dundee location opened, Thames and two other bivocational church planters – Tori Stone and Chris Franklin – began meeting with interested people in the Thames' home on Sunday afternoons. Over the past six months, the small house church has expanded to nearly 20 regularly participating adults and about half as many children. The group quickly outgrew the space. In April they moved to Blend to continue holding simple Sunday gatherings, followed by a meal.

One young man who joined the staff as a barista had no experience of the church and held a "generic" view of Christians. He participated in the team barbecues and dinners, as well as observed the ethos of Blend each day at work.

"He just said to us, 'Every idea I had of Christianity, you guys don't live into any of that,'" Thames said. "He said things like, 'I want a faith for myself.' I said, 'Let's keep this conversation going.'"

'Church should be more simple'

The worship gatherings at the Thames' home are simple times of Bible teaching, prayer, worship and communion, ending with a meal together.

"We're convinced church has just gotten too complicated. We just really believe the church should be much more simple – not simplistic, but simple," Thames said. "The district has been very supportive, both in sending and blessing and encouraging us. The

see "PLANT" • page 4

PLANT: Partnership is 'sign of hope for our future'

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After six months of meeting weekly in the home of Derrick and Dayna Thames, the new church plant outgrew the space and began meeting at the Blend coffee shop in downtown Dundee at the end of April. Photo courtesy Derrick Thames.

church in Perth has been extremely supportive, coming up and doing prayer walks in the city and joining us in the shop."

The church plant in Dundee is the second of two new works in Scotland in 2018, the first one being The Charter in Tollcross, Glasgow, an effort by Parkhead Church of

the Nazarene. (Read how it started: <https://tinyurl.com/y59h7g6l>)

"The Dundee plant is very exciting, as it's a three-way partnership between Blend coffee shops, Perth Trinity Nazarene church and the British Isles North District," said Jim Ritchie, the district superintendent. "This model is one we will use again

in our desire to plant regularly on our district, as it is very replicable. Working together in this way is central to our district strategy. It is self-sustainable, entrepreneurial and innovative. [I] see it not only as a vibrant part of the district's life now, but a sign of hope for our future." □

From scratch: Recipe for a church plant

Bivocational minister Tori Stone (photo right) shares her experiences and insights on what it is like to plant a brand new church in partnership with a Nazarene-led coffee shop (see story page 3).

WWM: How did you get the church plant started?

Tori: We had been talking with people for months beforehand about how we were planning to start this new church. Once we started meeting, we reached out to a handful of people to join us. There are, of course, Derrick and Chris's families, a good number of the Blend staff, along with their roommates or spouses, and others were people (customers) that we had met through working at Blend.

WWM: What does your typical week look like?

Tori: I typically work three days a week in the shop. Every other Thursday, I join a Young Mums group that is reaching out to young mums (21 and under) in Dundee to help them, support them, and show them the love of Jesus.

I have recently gotten connected with a group of people from another church within the city that have previously run English classes for refugees that have

see "RECIPE" • page 5



Photo courtesy Merritt Franklin

RECIPE: Small steps lead to bigger ones

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been settled in Dundee over the years. I am excited to be gathering at the house of a family from Syria this Friday for the first time to meet with them, as well as learning how to make homemade baklava from them in their home.

I always try to find a day to myself during the week to rest, reflect on what God is doing, and catch up on the daily life things that need to be done.

Other than that, I spend time looking for opportunities to build on relationships with people. Many times I will spend a good amount of my time off in Blend reading a book or writing, but it almost always turns into getting to meet with a customer and getting to know them better.

What are some of the challenges involved with planting a new work?

Tori: I think ... to be a part of something new, rather than stepping into something that is already in place, is always a challenge. It forces you to step out of your comfort zone, to take risks, and it needs you to think outside of the box. All of these things are challenges to me. I

often feel unequipped, not enough, and I question myself weekly. However, I have been able to work with a team of people here (Blend staff and our core church team) who are gifted, compassionate, loving people who help me through those times and remind me that God is at work in each of us and that He is doing something here even when we cannot see all the small pieces at work.

"I have learned to celebrate the small steps, because they are what God is using to do something much bigger."

-- Tori Stone, church planter

How have you seen God work over the past year?

Tori: I have watched our core team come together, learn from one another, and daily work to be more vulnerable so we can be the people God has called us to be here. I see growth and excitement when one of our staff members from church really engages with a customer, or even if two people who have been coming on Sunday nights

connect together for the first time. This is what we are about: building relationships, and that goes so far beyond just our Sunday night gathering.

What is a typical gathering like?

Tori: So far our Sunday gatherings include a time of worship in song led by Melanie Ward, who moved to Dundee from Paisley, and is one of the leaders at Blend. We look at a passage of scripture and we discuss it together as a group. We have someone take the kids out and do a Bible lesson with them. We have decided to share communion weekly, and we gather for a meal after every week.

What have you learned so far through this experience?

Tori: I think what I have learned is to celebrate the small steps, because they are what God is using to do something much bigger. If you don't take the small steps, and you just jump ahead, you are going to miss out on some of the interesting stories and the real detail of how God is at work among your community. □

Local church ministry

Refugee finds courage in Nazarene church

By Gina Grate Pottenger

Rania was just a teenager when her mom died while protecting Rania and her three sisters.*

In Palestinian territory, Rania's family owned a large house and villa right on the border with Israel.

In 2007, a militant group moved into their neighborhood, using the civilian properties as a base for firing missiles into Israel. The Israeli army discovered where the rockets were coming from, and returned fire.

One night, members of the militant group barged into Rania's house. They demanded that Rania's mother,

a well-known TV journalist, come to the property where they were pinned down by the missiles and gunfire to bring them some of her clothes. They wanted to disguise themselves as women to escape the army's onslaught. To follow their demands, she would have to walk right into the crossfire. She and her husband refused to help them.

see "COURAGE" • page 6

COURAGE: Defying fear to remain in Croatia

Continued from page 5

So the militants threatened the family.

"They said, 'We'll take your girls,'" Rania remembers.

So her mother agreed to do the task.

"We knew right away she would not come back."

Up until this moment in the interview, Rania, a young, attractive woman with a quick, bright smile, has told her story without emotion. But now she pauses to contain her tears, as the memory of losing her mother so violently remains deeply upsetting to her. Once she has regained a calm, she continues to explain that after her mother was killed, her father fled with the girls to a country in north Africa, where they tried to start life over without their mother.

That's how Rania became a refugee the first time.



Becoming a refugee again

She grew into young adulthood and went to university there, married and became pregnant.

In 2017, Rania and her husband began a circuitous journey to Europe, starting first in Egypt. Rania was seven months pregnant when they reached Turkey and paid a smuggler to ferry them to Greece in

a rubber boat.

As they neared Greece, snipers she believes were in Turkey opened fire on the boat, which was still in Turkish waters. A smuggler screamed to the snipers that a pregnant woman was in the boat. They also shouted for help to the international police who were nearby, but the police shouted back that they couldn't help until the boat crossed into international water. Try to reach the international water, they urged.

As the gunfire continued, Rania and her husband were thrown into the sea. Rania didn't know how to swim. She struggled to keep her head above water.

Someone threw ropes to them, and hauled them back into the boat. But she was bleeding.

Failing to reach Greece safely, the boat returned to Turkey where Rania was hospitalized, had surgery, and gave birth to their son.

The entire incident still sparks anxiety in Rania, whenever she remembers it.

She remained in the hospital for 10 days, but after she was released, they tried again to reach Greece. They made it, but after they arrived, Rania's womb became infected, and their

infant fell ill. The Red Cross moved the family to Austria.

Her family lived there for a year. Gifted with language, very quickly Rania became conversationally fluent in German, the official language spoken in Austria. As European countries have shifted asylum-seekers from one place to another, Rania's family eventually were moved to Zagreb, the capital

"We often don't know where people are on their journey... but they are on a journey. They come, they participate, they listen, they experience Christ in community, and I have learned that God is moving in the lives of people, even when I couldn't see it myself. God is drawing people to him, and God is calling our community to walk alongside people on this traumatic journey."

-- Betsy Scott, Nazarene missionary

city of Croatia. The government housed them in a large hotel repurposed for asylum seekers waiting for official permission and documents to permanently settle in the country.

New friends

While living in the refugee center, Rania met an Arabic-speaking couple who are also refugees, and are leaders in the Nazarene church in Zagreb. The wife sat with Rania and listened to her story. They became friends.

"Since the moment I came to Croatia, she is my only friend," Rania says.

After many visits together, the woman invited Rania to visit the church with her so she could meet other people and make more friends. Rania, who follows her culture's traditional faith, said she felt welcome at the church. She attended the English classes offered at the church's community center, called The Hub.

Rania's husband was desperate to return to northern Europe. But Rania was so exhausted by the frequent

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HOME: 'Church has become place of belonging'

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relocations, she didn't feel she had the strength to travel and start over once again. She wanted to remain in Croatia and try to make a life there.

"She decided not to go with him, and boldly decided to stay and raise her son by herself in a foreign country," said Betsy Scott, Nazarene missionary in Zagreb, who is co-leading the church with her husband, Dave. "She called the ministers, and the minister told her that we would be by her side."

Overcoming fear

Friends from her traditional faith pressured her not to mix with people from the Nazarene church. Although her husband now lives in another European country, he threatened her when she spent time with Christians. Afraid, she stopped attending the gatherings or engaging in the friendships for a long period.

About a month ago, she was drawn back to the Nazarene church. She shook off her fears and re-engaged

with the group and activities.

"When I was preaching on Easter, I looked at Rania, and she was listening so intently to the resurrection story. She keeps coming back to church," Betsy said. "Our church has become a place of belonging, a home, a community for people – broken people; people separated from their families; those experiencing loss due to their asylum-seeking journey. They feel safe and cared for. They have a family. We welcome Rania and [her son] as though they are one of our own."

When asked where Rania has seen God with her in her journey, she responds: "I saw him the most in the sea, because it was a miracle for me to survive with my kid."

A new life

Having studied accounting, she is

looking for a job in Zagreb. And she tries to fill her time with things she enjoys doing.

"I have a lot of hobbies and I am talented in many things. I'm a good cook. I can make Capsa (a rice dish) and marinated chicken and meat.

Cheese pizza. And the sweets. I challenge anyone with the sweets," she says, grinning.

Recently, Rania was able to move

out of the refugee center and into an apartment with her child. She fights to remain positive and strong for him.

"Good things are coming and I have to be strong," she says. "Because if I'm not strong, my son will be weak. I will look for good and I will find good. I will not surrender easy." □

**Name changed for security reasons*

"I will look for good and I will find good. I will not surrender easy."

- Rania

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German classes and Arabic Bible study help reach new families in Jerusalem

By Gina Grate Pottenger



When Annabelle Twal moved with her family from Switzerland to Jerusalem in 2014, she did not even dream that God would make use of her fluency in German to help start a new work.

After they arrived, Annabelle and her husband, Shahade, took leadership of the Jerusalem Church of the Nazarene, a diverse, English-speaking group made up of ex-pats from around the world, as well as some local Christians fluent in English.

Two of the Twals' three daughters attend a German school, where the students learn German as a second language. Most speak Arabic as their first language. But none of the other

Then, a few of the parents, who are nominal Christians – attending a worship service only once or twice a year – asked Shahade, who was born in Jordan, if he would organize a Bible study in Arabic. They were not receiving faith teaching or discipleship in their traditional Christian communities or churches, but are hungry to know and understand the Bible and God.

It made sense to combine the requests into one weekly gathering.

In October 2018, the Twals launched a weekly German class for the children in one area of the church, while in another space the parents meet to study the Bible, pray and sing simple Arabic worship songs. The meetings last two hours.

About 10 to 14 girls from the 1st through 3rd grades participate in the German classes, which are designed to support what the students have learned in school that week, or to prepare for upcoming exams.

Another woman from Switzerland, who lives in Jerusalem and who is fluent in Arabic, assists Annabelle. They divide the class into two groups so they can give the girls more individual

attention. The activities emphasize speaking German, because in school the focus is mainly reading and writing.

Each week, the activities include prayer, games, worksheets, simple worship songs, and a Bible lesson in German.

The other volunteer translates the Bible lesson into Arabic from

German, so the spiritual teachings are not lost on any girls who are struggling to keep up with the German vocabulary and sentence structure.

The Twals quickly realized that the 12 adults who attend – although traditionally Christian – had never learned even the basics of Christian faith or biblical knowledge.

“On our first Bible study, Shahade saw that this was their first time in an evangelical church,” Annabelle said. “So we started learning songs with them, teaching them how to pray, teaching them about the Bible -- how to open it and look for the different books in it. We had to start with the very basic things with them.

“Some of them have never heard or read the story of creation. So Shahade started with that, and then moved on to the first sin. After that, he shared with them why did we need Christ to come. He also started to explain to them who we are as Nazarenes.

“They have really good questions,” Annabelle added. “No one really teaches them how to live your faith.”

At first, only women attended the Bible study, but now most of the men attend, as well.

“Our goal is to share the good news with both the parents and the children, so that they might come to know Christ as their Lord and Savior; to disciple them so that they might grow in their faith; show them the love of Christ by serving their needs and the needs of their children,” said Annabelle. “Building a relationship with them.” □

“Some of them have never heard or read the story of creation. They have really good questions. No one really teaches them how to live your faith.”

-- Annabelle Twal, Nazarene leader in Jerusalem

parents speaks German, so they are unable to help their children at home with their schoolwork. As some of the parents realized Annabelle is fluent in German, they began to ask if she would tutor their children.

There are 28 children in her daughter's class, so Annabelle did not have enough time to spend with each of them individually.

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

"Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases..."

—Psalm 103:2-3

Prayer requests

Please pray for the new church being established in Dundee, Scotland, as they move to a new, larger space to worship, pray and study the Bible together. Ask God to provide all the strength, resources and love the leaders need to continue engaging local people and showing them God's love. Also pray for the continued flourishing of the three Blend coffee shops, that God would use them to reach many people for Him.

Pray for the church in Jerusalem, and for Shahade and Annabelle Twal as they reach local families through German classes and an Arabic Bible study. Ask God to make Himself personally known to these families, and that they would give their lives to Him, experiencing His love and sharing it with others.

Pray for Rania, her son, and the many other refugees in Croatia and around the Eurasia Region, that they will encounter God's love through compassionate Christians and churches near them. Ask God to strengthen and give wisdom and love to the Nazarenes who serve them.

Where Worlds Meet

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